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ABSTRACT

Intended for high school composition instructors, this book resolves the seeming contradiction between creative, expressive writing and formal exposition and argumentation by presenting a teaching method that treats creative writing as a necessary--if not sufficient--cause for exposition. The first two chapters describe a sequence of short fiction writing assignments based on James Moffett's spectrum of discourse (recording/drama, reporting/narrative, generalizing/exposition, theorizing/argument), then discuss the progression from fiction writing to increasingly abstract exposition and argumentation. The third chapter discusses building this four-step sequence around the themes of a literature work being studied, while the fourth chapter describes assignments for taking students from "recording" present events to "theorizing" or developing an argument. A concluding chapter explores the use of this sequence in content area classes. Appendixes include a discussion of the importance of composition theory, a course outline, and notes from "Teaching the Universe of Discourse" by James Moffett, the book which provided the framework for this instructional sequence. (HTH)

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Writing Teachers at Work

Out of the Heart

How to Design Writing Assignments for High School Courses

by Dixie Gibbs Dellinger

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DEDICATION

To my students, with whom
all things are possible.

"... for out of the heart
the mouth speaketh."

Matthew 12:34

"Writing should be taught as an
extension of speech."

-James Moffett

Preface

"Now I don't see anything the matter with that, do you?" Dixie Dellinger was sitting in my office; she had just completed this monograph. But she talked instead of two sprightly old men, craftsmen at their carpentry, mountain people like herself, who recently had worked on her house. "Now I don't see anything the matter with that, do you?" It was the one compliment they allowed themselves for a task flawlessly completed.

This monograph is such a task, but Dixie would never allow herself even that line. I have learned to read her quiet pride instead in a voice even softer and stronger than usual and an electric flash of green eyes and red hair. My learning began in 1968; Dixie was an older student, and I was a very young instructor. One day someone asked the differences between bad poetry and good. I did what every young English instructor would do by reflex; I picked on Kilmer's "Trees." The next class Dixie handed me something she had just written, "Ignorant Bards and Smart Reviewers." It began

> I know that I shall never see
> A critic who has made a tree.

and ended

> Errors are made by Kilmer and me
> That only critics and God have wit to see.

I needed that lesson; I hope I have profited by it.

Later in that course Dixie handed me, as a journal entry, a piece which I think helps explain the strength of her work here. At any rate I include it, with her reluctant permission, as a celebration and a sign of the deep, hidden, easily misunderstood roots of a culture, roots which invisibly nourish the ideas of this monograph.

> My bedspread was once a ball of string; my mother's hands made the difference. The quilt folded at the foot is white and red; her stitches formed the pattern of concentric circles. Her face looks at me from the top of the old chest. Her voice speaks through

neat tiny handwriting in the margins of her Bibles. Her body gave me birth; her mind is in mine. That body has returned to the dust, the active mind is stilled; both have done their work. One day I, too, will be dust. I have given birth; my mind is active. What will be left of the chain?

My mother's mother, and her mother, too, lay in the soil atop a mountain. The laurel grew, the blooms faded, the leaves fell but they never knew. Deep in woods they lay, along with sisters, brothers and father. Two hundred years of peace and quiet, only broken in the spring and fall when my mother and I with rakes and hoes cleared away the debris above them. We talked in soft, quiet voices as we worked. Here, this is Aunt Hulda, she had to die at the poor-farm, and the county buried her. There simply wasn't enough to go around back then, and Maw was a widow with no money to help her elder sister. And here; be careful how you move, Aunt Hulda has no headstone, only that rotten board. Here is Ladson. A fine young man, too young to go in that terrible war, but he came back. Then he died from lifting a two-hundred-pound bag of flour. So young and so strong. I don't know why he has no stone. And here is Grand-daddy Greer, between his two wives. He came to this country, a boy of five, in 1796. They were Scotch-Irish and landed in Philadelphia. Look what it says on her stone, his second wife, "died safe at home." When my time comes I hope I can die safe at home. You go and get the rake, now, we've cleaned it off pretty good. Only you and I and Uncle Joe and Bob know where this place is, and someday only you will know. Take good care of it, these are our family. I will, Mama.

The quiet leaves have drifted down here for the last time, new roads are built, bull-dozers run, young people buy beautiful mountain woods and plan lovely carpeted rooms for bright-eyed girls. These headstones, what are they? some long-forgotten family graveyard. Well, we don't want it in our yard, of course; we'll do the right thing. We'll have it moved to the churchyard, that's where they should be. Why would anyone want their family buried in such an out-of-the-way place! Could that rut be an old road?

The old blue mountains wear lower with time, and the people grow and fall to the ground like the trees. Dust thou art and to dust returneth; and the breath to God who gave it. All that's left is a spread, a quilt, a legacy of words and a germ of the will.

Now I don't see anything the matter with that, Dixie. Or with this monograph. Not one thing.

I don't need to comment more directly on Dixie Dellinger's monograph or summarize it; it speaks clearly for itself. I do here owe a debt that fortunate teachers owe their students. One person, speaking from the heart, can help another learn to do the same.

Sam Watson, Jr., *Co-Director*
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I

Creative Writing: A Fiction Sequence

You know how it is. We English teachers do a little highwire act, balancing a pole with *Creative Writing* on one end and *Expository Writing*, or some such label, on the other. Back and forth we tilt, seeking a precarious balance, pulled to the one side by talent and preference and to the other by duty and dedication to prepare students for their future writing tasks. Sometimes, fearing that we will never find a true balance, we are tempted to jump down from the wire and abandon its rigors in favor of grammar drills and multiple-choice tests with one good essay question at the end.

We got into this precarious, yet pleasurable, predicament because of a revolution that has taken place in teaching writing in recent years, and the attendant explosion in writing about teaching writing and research about composition. All of us in the English classroom have been the benefactors of this revolution. We have had joyful experiences finding out that students of all ability levels can write things so good that we rush between classes to show a colleague, "Look what Bill Jones just wrote!" Such an experience carries a glow that lasts for days. But this excitement only happens when Bill writes in his own way about things he cares about and knows through some kind of experience; that is, when he is writing from his heart.

Then, maybe even the very next day, we ask Bill to write an expository essay, and he is unable to write an acceptable response to a simple topic. We would wonder if we had not dreamed our earlier discovery had not such discoveries been made so often and had they not been recorded in the many publications about teaching writing that we have read in the last decade. So we remain on the high-wire, feeling somehow that the forms of writing at opposite ends of our pole should not be so opposite. Indeed, it would seem that they should somehow work together instead of against each other.

I have been a teacher for eleven years and I have been from one end of the high-wire to the other, sometimes nimble-footed and sometimes hanging by my fingers. But I have begun to find my balance now

and to resolve the seeming contradiction between creative, expressive writing and formal exposition and argumentation. This paper will share some of my search for not just a quantitative balance between them but a method which treats creative writing as a necessary—if not sufficient—cause for exposition.

The theory on which I have based my work with composition is found in James Moffett's *Teaching the Universe of Discourse.* I first read this book in 1970 when I was a student teacher. I liked it but did not have the necessary experience to imagine a way to put this purely theoretical framework into classroom practice. What I liked most about it was the spectrum of discourse which Moffett presents. In its simplest form, four divisions appear (Moffett, p. 35, 47).

Recording	"what is happening"	chronologic of perception	DRAMA	POETRY
Reporting	"what has happened"	chronologic of memory	NARRATIVE	
Generalizing	"what happens"	analogic of classification	EXPOSITION	
Theorizing	"what can/might/ should happen"	tautologic of transformation	ARGUMENT	

Within the narrative mode, Moffett identifies and sequentially arranges eleven points of view which move outward from the most ego-centric speech to the most distant narrative voice (pp.123-147). (See Appendix C for definitions). In my own early work with Moffett, I used this analysis of point of view to help my students read fiction. Only later did I try to work with the spectrum of discourse in teaching writing.

Meanwhile, I spent several years giving out composition topics on the knocking at the gate in *Macbeth* (I wonder if anyone really cared after de Quincey?), assigning all sorts of paragraphs and drawing structural diagrams of the perfect five-paragraph theme, all the while going on about thesis and topic sentence and support. Not that the results were bad; in fact, they were often good. But the papers did not have the life in them that we have learned to look for today, or the life that I saw in creative writing from the same students. During that time, I accumulated a sizable shelf of books on how to teach writing. Each book helped something, but no book told how to survive on the high-wire; that is, how to help students write from the heart and the head at the same time.

When our school system began an all-elective curriculum of quarter-unit courses in English, the prospect of teaching nine weeks of creative writing alone made me think of Moffett. Why not write some of these narrative types instead of just reading them? The idea was born.

The sequence of assignments below has been tried in several classes

with students of all ability levels, interests, and backgrounds for writing. The results have been almost spectacular in many cases. In all cases, the students have produced good writing and have felt very good about what they were doing. Later, I will tell about how I am carrying the sequence on through the expository and argumentative modes of discourse in a composition and grammar semester course.

In creative writing, I use the first two levels, set up through the following sequence of assignments:

Assignment 1. Write an interior monologue representing the thoughts of this person at the moment of his life represented in the photograph.

Assignment 2. Write a dramatic monologue that this person might speak to another person. Retain the character and situation originally set up in the interior monologue.

Assignment 3. Write a short play with these two characters, relating the same situation and incidents in dramatic form.

Assignment 4. Write an episode for a short story recounting the same encounter, adding description and narration. Decide on point of view and add to the description of characters and setting.

Assignment 5. Write a poem based on the short story episode. The voice of the poem may be any one of the characters, or a persona you create. The mode may be narrative or dramatic or lyric.

As written here, this set of assignments is based on some photographs of people in a kit called "Eye Openers" (see *Resources*), but the assignments could be based on other pictures, on literary or historical characters, or on students' personal experiences. I have found these photographs to be excellent as bases for writing the series of assignments here described.

The sequence begins with the most intimate, internal voice on Moffett's first level of discourse, recording. The voice is interior monologue. But the first goal of creative writing, particularly with timid or reluctant writers, is fluency. The students need to get words down on paper with ease and to become confident that they can write something good. To reach this goal quickly, I have students write in teams as they learn techniques of writing in different voices and develop their sense of style and tone.

On the second day of class (we spend the first day with classroom details and perhaps responding to a survey on attitudes toward writing) we form writing teams. Our aims in creative writing at my school are to help students of all ability levels learn that they can write and learn to enjoy writing. Specifically, we try to see that all the students who take

creative writing try writing both prose and poetry, in story and play form. So my first aim is self-confidence and fluency, and I use teams to accomplish this goal. Each student draws a partner from a hat by lot, so there is no "picking friends" (which might lead to no real growth in imagination, since friends often think alike). While the partners are finding each other and selecting a place to sit together in the room, I move around (ignoring all indications of displeasure at the "luck" of getting a partner) with a handful of photographs fanned out like a deck of cards, upside down. "Pick a card. Any card. Now turn it over." The photographs create a stir in the room. "Uh,oh! Can we change?" I tell them it is Fate. The assignment is one page of interior monologue by the end of the period. Assignment 1 and a definition from the Moffett sequence of narrative types (see Appendix C, p. 99) go on the board, and with some classes I may read a short passage as an example.

It is really amazing how quickly and how easily two students can create a situation for the character in the photograph and begin to imagine the character's thoughts in the situation. I move about the room with hints to get them started if they are having trouble, but help rarely is needed. The sharing of the task builds confidence, and they soon learn two can create as a team, often more richly than one.

They usually settle on one as the scribe since "you write better than I do." Some write two versions and then combine, but I discourage that practice at first in favor of teamwork, which seems to work out best in the end. Toward the end of the period, I ask them to check over punctuation and spelling together to be sure the piece is just the way they want it. I overhear theories of comma usage, "Well, I know a comma goes there because I breathed when I read it!" and see some scurrying for the dictionaries. Then, "Is that the bell already?" and the first class period has gone. The pictures and their accompanying monologues are left with me and the students leave class, often beside a new friend, saying, "I know something else we could have said if there had been time." I have learned that it is always good to stop a writing activity when the students feel they had lots more to say if there had just been time.

At home that night, I type up these paragraphs. It takes only a couple of hours because a hand-written page is only a short paragraph when typed; besides, there is only one piece for each two students in class. The typing makes their work look professional and gives them a sense of quantity and paragraph structure when the classroom display begins to take shape on the back wall in the next two days.

Next day in class, I return the photographs and the pieces to the writers and we sit in a circle and read them aloud. The writer does not show the photograph until after the writing has been read and discussed.

In a recent class session, early in September, the energy of summer was still with us. The class was twenty-six in number, all juniors and seniors, with a wide range of ability and varying preparation for writing. We used the photographs, and on the third day of class we sat down to hear the first reading. Doug and Ann, both black, had a picture of a young black, sharply dressed, with sunglasses hiding his eyes, facing straight into the camera. Anne read their piece, which I had known would be good when I saw the first three words:

> *Um, um, um. I've got to get that wrap before the day is over. Everything any dude would ever need not to mention want! Sweet, sexy, fine. Just one chance, and I'm sure I can pull that. Well maybe I should wait and let her give some kind of indication, let her start it off. Na, than I'll probably be waiting for the rest of my life. I better be cool and wait until I get myself together before I blow the whole deal. And leave the way I came "empty handed." I don't guess I'll come on too strong from the start, just a cool "What's happening" should do it. But whatever I'm going to do I've got to do now because I'm not the only one after that wrap. Um, now's my chance, her friends are gone the other way. I don't know what I'm going to do but it's now or never. Ah, I'm sure I can handle it, after all I am the kid.*
>
> - Doug Simmons
> - Anne McDowell

When she finished, the response was instantaneous. "Hey, that's good!" buzzed around the circle. We discussed the writing without looking at the picture. "Can you tell what sort of person this is by the voice you hear in the writing?" "Yes, it is a young black dude." And then the photograph brought smiles of satisfaction and pride all around. We talked a little about what made the piece so good: tone, feelings that are well-articulated, authentic voice for the character. The students are unconsciously working out their own theory of what makes good writing, and they are learning how to evaluate, not only the work of others, but their own as well.

We then heard a piece from shy Becky and Edith, who had a picture of an old man, toothless, with a scraggly growth of beard, wearing shabby clothes. Edith read their work in a soft voice as the class listened quietly.

> *Oh Lordie, those beautiful birds sitting over in the parking lot. I really can't hardly see them as well as I could years ago. I remember when I could walk to the park, feed the birds and walk back home with no trouble at all. Now I have to sit in this old park an hour or longer before I can get the strength to go someplace. Wow! Look at that*

pretty little thing walking across the street. It's a pity I'm not young because if I was I'd have enough energy to go catch her. Even if I could catch up with her I wouldn't know what to say. I bet she'd tell me off good. I can hear her now calling me an old drag and telling me to get away from her. Well, there goes another one. This one's a little older. Maybe I could get a conversation started with her. We could talk about the olden days. Nah, she looks much too sophisticated to talk to someone like me. I wish Salley was still living. I feel as though God let me down when he took her away from me. We didn't have any children, but I wish so much that we did. Then I'd have someone to look after me. I'd have somebody to go home to. Speaking of home. I suppose I'd better start making tracks that way, even though there's nothing waiting for me but my old dog, Buster. Oh, I should quit making myself feel so low down. Old folks like me should realize God knows best and he has a purpose for everything that happens.

- Becky McCombs
- Edith McCain

The reactions were quick and uplifting. "I can just *see* that old guy, now!" Ken Macrorie notes, in discussing free writing, that "...the writers who had achieved strong effects through rhythm or other techniques of sound had achieved them unconsciously. When praised for an artistic effect they frequently said, 'What?' and listened with amazement to what they had written." (*Searching Writing*, p. 6) This statement describes perfectly the mood and the reactions in this class.

Then other students read, and we discussed the writing and what made it good. We decided that good writing had the power to move our feelings and a quality of making a character come alive in our minds' eye. Then Wanda and Ken gave us the chills with this one, written as the thoughts of a young man muffled in a dark shadowy corner so that only his eyes shone in a stream of light:

There she is in that blue satin dress. I wonder if she sees me. It's midnight now and soon she'll be going to bed and that's where I'll make my move. What if someone were to see me; what shall I do? I guess I'll kill them too. As I look at a distant window I can see her image putting on her nightgown and my heart beats rapidly when I think of her lying there with her blond hair flowing loosely. I can feel my hand touch and caressing her warm and tender body and the sweet smell of her perfume. I wonder if she knows about me? Will she put up a fight? What if someone would plan to do this to my sister. Oh, let me get hold of myself.

- Ken Phelps
- Wanda Wallace

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In one day of writing and one day of reading, the students in this class had gained confidence in their own ability to write; had mastered a definite technique, the interior monologue; had read their work aloud before others and earned their praise; had thought about what good writing is; and had made a relationship with someone else as a partner. A long time later, I came upon an entry in a student's journal written about his partner. He said she meant a lot to him because "sometimes I have trouble getting started, but she helps me with an idea and then we get our piece going, and the teacher likes our work together."

Next day I clipped a number to each photograph and mounted them on the back wall under our sign "Writing on the Wall" along with the typed copies of the interior monologues for each picture. Turning the desks toward the wall of faces, we were ready for the next step, dramatic monologue, "...an unintroduced, uninterrupted transcription of what one character situated in a given time and circumstances is saying to another character, whose responses, if any, are merely reflected in the monologue" (Moffett, p. 124). After a little discussion, perhaps a brief example, each team drew a number from the hat. That character will be the one their first character speaks to. The imagined speaker now has an audience, and the writing shifts from recording thoughts (egocentric speech) to recording a speaking voice (socialized speech). Again, one page is the goal and soon, "Gosh! Is that the bell? We had more to say!" But the papers came in, and next day we read. This time, the question of dialect arose. We discussed the difference in voice when a character is speaking from when he is thinking to himself, how one may think "going" but say "goin'," and how a writer can show much about a character merely by recording his speech patterns.

Becky and Edith got into their character quickly as he "met" a ragged-looking fellow with a cigar stub protruding from a stubbly, pock-marked face and wearing a battered black hat and thread-bare coat. They decided this must be a "wine-o" and gave their old man a little twist to his own character as well.

> *How are you doing there Frank? The friendly neighborhood wine-o. Hows the wines tasting lately? Good huh? Well, anything should taste good to you. After all you don't pay for it. Oh, you do pay for it, uh? Since when? The last time I saw you, you barely had anything. You must have found a job since the last time we conversed. Really, well it certainly was a miracle that a man like you found a job so quick. The last time I talked to you was less than three hours ago. Oh yeah, I forgot you were too bombed to even remember what happened three hours ago. You should really give up wine. It's bad for health, just listen to that ole nagging cough. It just goes to show that you are too old to be smoking the way you are. That's why you ought*

to realize how old you look. You're not even as old as I am but yet you look it. You should straighten up and find yourself a good woman, or should I say good women. Just take myself for example; now I beleive in a good women. By the way do you have any women? Well, what the heck I don't suppose any nice respectable woman would want you anyway. A woman would have in you she admires and I'll tell you fellow you just ain't got what it takes. I took Mary out to dinner, and tonight I don't know where I'am going to take Martha. I sure don't have any money. Eventually though I'll get my check. I guess I could take her out then or maybe we could at my house and watch T.V. or something. But I have a little money put up for grocery. If it comes down to it I'll guess I could use a little of it. It's almost the first of the month and it won't be long until I'll be getting my check. Hay, wait a minute, where are you going? I haven't finished telling you what we could do. We could go down to Trade St. and pick up a couple of women tonight. As a matter of fact I know a gal named Pat. She's a wine-o just like yourself. I bet the two of you will get alone just fine. Alright then everthings fine. Then it's all settled. Meet me tonight at the intersection between Main and First St. Don't forget, I'll be waiting there for you. See you tonight!

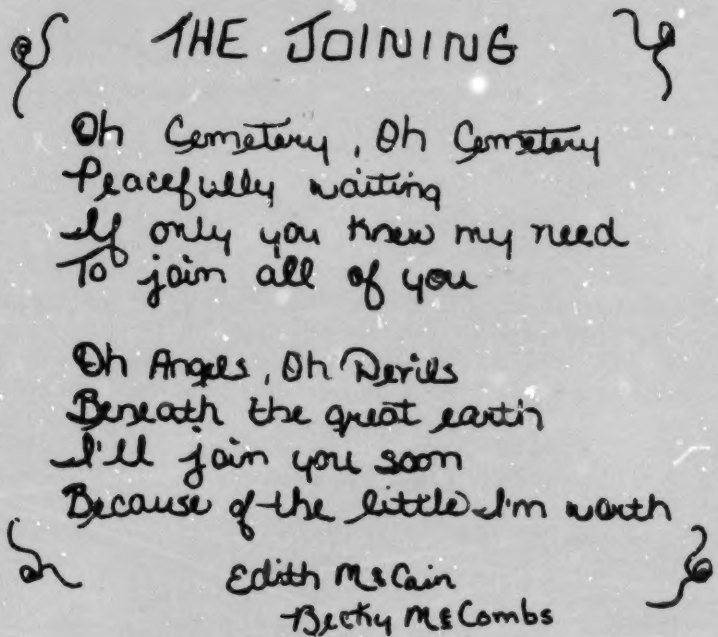
Ha, Ha, Ha, Well there's another one of my crank jokes. If Frank knew what I Knew he'd better forget about tonight because I'll never be there. He'll be there waiting forever. How could he believe me? I haven't been within ten feet of a woman in years. Uh, there goes my buddy Joe. Hay Joe! Wait up a minute! What you got planned for tonight?

- Edith McCain
- Becky McCombs

The class liked this one, and it gave me the chance to mention something vital to writing good dramatic monologue—that the speaker often reveals more about himself than he really means to. If these students later read Robert Browning in their literature classes, they will know first-hand exactly what Browning is up to.

And that brings me to poetry as a form of discourse. As Moffett points out, poetry includes the whole range of discourse (p. 47), or may we say any mode of discourse can be expressed in poetic form. To put it still another way, any speaking voice may speak to any audience about any subject and do it in a poem. The writing teams look through volumes of poetry in the room to find a poem written in interior monologue or dramatic monologue, then think of what their own character might say in the same shape or form. Becky and Edith chose "Water Bird" by James Purdy (*Man in the Poetic Mode*, Vol. 4, p. 7), and used its

shape to write this poem for their old man*:



THE JOINING

Oh Cemetery, Oh Cemetery
Peacefully waiting
If only you knew my need
To join all of you

Oh Angels, Oh Devils
Beneath the great earth
I'll join you soon
Because of the little I'm worth

Edith McCain
Becky McCombs

This activity draws attention to the shape of poetry and to use of voice. When students encounter the term *persona* in literature classes, they will understand that as well.

There are other "fall-out" effects from this approach to teaching creative writing. Most of our students will not become professional writers, nor will they weave words into drama, poetry, or fiction very often after leaving school. But that is not to argue against its worth, for the enriching effect on their reading skill is worthwhile. After writing interior monologue, students can more easily understand what soliloquy is. They also recognize that the speaking voice in a piece of writing is not necessarily the writer's own voice. Perhaps that one step in reading is the most important one, for it eliminates a tendency among young students to read into a writer's life the things he writes about. As these students write imaginatively in the voices of people in photographs, certainly they are drawing upon their own knowledge and experience, however

* A particularly good source for quick classroom references is the *Man* series edited by Sarah Solotaroff for McDougal, Littell and Company, 1970. It contains six volumes each in four titles: *Man in the Poetic Mode, Man in the Dramatic Mode, Man in the Fictional Mode,* and *Man in the Expository Mode.* The series contains fine photographs and has no editorial or pedagogical additions to the text.

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vicarious. But it is not directly their own personal lives that are expressed in the writing, and the audience in the classroom knows that. Not only does that factor help to reduce personal risk in reading one's work aloud to one's classmates, it is an important leap forward in reading skill. The students learn by writing that when a writer expresses his piece in the first person, often he is not reciting his own life, but that of an imaginary character that he has created in his mind. In the words of Browning's duke, "I call that ... a wonder, now."*

Back to developing writing skills in the class. By the end of the first week, the students knew how to use two techniques: soliloquy (interior monologue) and dramatic monologue. They had written two compositions and read them aloud before the class, with rewarding results. They had begun to develop definitions and criteria for good writing out of their own emotional responses, and they had generated a sense of community and felt at home in the class. By the end of this week, it was no longer necessary to remind anyone of the ground rule I had set at the beginning: "No put-downs and no personal applications." I had guided the discussions to emphasize positive, specific comments about methods and content and to save for other times trivial quibbling about "Should you have a comma there?" We concentrated on the relations between writer, subject, and audience. Out of this process, we were developing an evaluative system that we could all respect and trust.

The next step in the creative writing sequence is dramatic dialogue. The team stayed together and worked with the same two characters as before. For the drama, they needed to fill out the other side of the conversation not included in dramatic monologue, give the characters names and descriptions and a stage setting in which to appear, and also to write some directions for the actors. Since several new things are to be learned, this step usually takes up most of the second week of class. First, we need to look closely at the conventions of writing a play. We get out volumes of plays and look at the way they are set up on the pages: first the title, then the cast of characters, then a paragraph of setting, and finally the dialogue itself with the directions for the actors inserted in parentheses. We use one class period to look over these conventions and think about how they apply to our own material. We need also to learn stage terms like *stage left, stage right, center stage, up stage,* and *down stage.* A diagram on a hand-out or copied from the chalkboard will go into their class notes for future reference. I might also add that a

* David Siff had his students write through the eyes of their "opposites" in society ("Teaching Freshman English to New York Cops," *College English,* January 1975, pp. 540-547). He noted the "insight and imaginative awareness" and "... exquisitely sensitive first person narrative..." that resulted. The same qualities show up consistently in the work of the students when they write through the eyes of the persons in these photographs. It may have something do decentering, as Moffett presents the connection with Piaget (p. 71).

visualizing skill is being taught here that not even all adults have learned; that is, to look at a diagram—something akin to a blueprint—and to visualize a three-dimensional space on the stage. Everything learned in creative writing class is not limited to writing!

Back to the play. Our teams (not unlike Rodgers and Hart or Lerner and Lowe, I tell them) first decide what they want to see on the stage when the curtain goes up. In this step another skill enters, that of symbolization, for I tell them they must create in writing a set that we could construct on the small stage at our school if we needed to. So, as some begin to generate ideas—"We want our play to take place in a park," or "We want ours to be on a city street,"—we begin to think what objects could be used on stage to create impressions we want: a park bench, a shrub, a street sign, a trash receptacle, some potted geraniums, and presto, a park. Or a sign "Joe's Bar" in a window with a table and two chairs on the sidewalk outside. Most students love drama and are excited about writing one. The questions come thick and fast, "Do we get to put it on?" "Do we have to memorize the lines?" "I can bring the park bench." The class period is over and the ideas are popping right and left. So the next day's task is to write the paragraph of stage setting and to identify the cast of characters, including a brief statement of description for each. To keep the task clear and avoid complications, I insist that the students not bring in additional characters, since we are learning technique and not yet trying to produce a "great" play. Also, since I plan to have the teams present their plays on stage as Reader's Theater, they will not have to get others to participate at this point. At the end of the second day, we will have the cast, the setting, and will have talked some about how we want to bring the characters on stage, where they will enter, and what the opening line will be.

It takes about two or three writing days to finish a short play and get a revised, clean copy for me to photocopy. So, in the third week of a creative writing class, we are ready to go on stage. We take a day for walk-throughs, or sometimes we make a "stage" out of one side of the classroom. On reading day, each team introduces its cast and reads the setting, then shifts into acting and presents the play to the rest of the class. Sometimes we have guests, too.

THE LONER AND THE WINE-O

by

Edith McCain and Becky McCombs

CHARACTERS

GEORGE: *A loner appr. 75 yrs. old, ragged looking with worn out clothing: a beige wool overcoat with lightly colored small hat, has on glasses and needs a shaving.*

FRANK: *A wine-o appr. 60, ragged clothing wearing a black trench coat and a black brim hat, lacks teeth and smoking a cigar.*

THE SET: *In a park in a city, a bench centerstage, a tree is downstage, right and left. The sun shines dully over the top of bare trees lacking leaves. Old trashcans are full of wine bottles on each side of the bench. The park is full of golden and reddish brown leaves lying all over the place. The park is noisy with the sounds of everyday activity.*

IN THE PARK(When the curtains open) George enters from left stage, takes a seat on the bench and looks around. He notices Frank who is making his entrance from right stage. George calls out to Frank.

GEORGE: Hello Frank, what you looking for?

FRANK: *Well what in the devil do you think I'm a-looking for?*

GEORGE: I don't know Frank, but I guess it's wine, since you're looking in those ole smelly trashcans.

FRANK: *(taking the seat next to George) Well you bet you buttons thats what I'm looking for. You don't expect me to pay for it, do you?*

GEORGE: Why of course not, that's the reason you are what you are cause you don't have a job.

FRANK: *Why who says I don't? I worked all morning for Mr. Fortenberry a-picking up papers from that park over on the area of the far side of town. (pointing to leftstage). George, I don't know why you are so nosy.*

GEORGE: I'm just glad to hear that you got that job because the last time I saw you you didn't know where your next bottle of wine was coming from.

FRANK: *Well---theres still another problem.*

GEORGE: Whats that?

FRANK: *I still don't know where my next bottles a-coming from.*

GEORGE: *Well why don't ya, you got a job now.*

FRANK: *I wouldn't exactly say that.*

GEORGE: *Why not - go ahead and tell me. You blowed the job didn't you Frank? (looking unapprovingly at Frank)*

FRANK: *No!*

GEORGE: *Well why not? (-pause-) go ahead and tell me what happened then?*

FRANK: *Mr. Fortenberry got mad at me.*

GEORGE: *Why?*

FRANK: *(looking up at the sky) He just did.*

GEORGE: *Uh, Frank, don't tell me no lie now; I know you're about to 'cause you always look up.*

FRANK: *O.K. George O.K. I confess (looking up again and then to the ground.) Ol Mr. Fortenberry fired me cause I spent more time a-looking for wine bottles than I did a-pickin' up those papers.*

GEORGE: *Exactly how many papers did you pick up?*

FRANK: *(looking to the sky) What did you say, George?*

GEORGE: *How many papers did you pick up? and don't tell me no lie.*

FRANK: *None! I didn't pick up not one single paper and I don't wanna hear you lecturing me neither. (looking mean toward George and coughing)*

GEORGE: *You gotta stop smoking those ole cigars—listen to that nagging cough you got.*

FRANK: *Don't worry I'm gonna have to stop anyway cause don't have no money to buy none.*

GEORGE: *OOOH FRANK! look over there coming down the street (looking and pointing to left stage) I think them are the same two I saw yesterday. My goodness, they seem to be pretty nice.*

FRANK: *Lets invite them over to have a sit down.*

GEORGE: *No, they going the other way and they wouldn't be interested in us ole goons anyway.*

FRANK: *Who you calling a goon?*

GEORGE: *You, look at you, you're nothing but a ole bomb.*

FRANK: *How would you know, you can't see me anyway.*

GEORGE: I don't have to see you, your smell could tell anyone you're nothing but a bomb.

FRANK: My smell, I thought you would have said my voice, it's a wonder if you can't hear me and the whole world with all those ears you got.

GEORGE: Now, Now Frank let's cut out all this nonsense. Here we is old men acting like 5 year old children; besides we go back a long way.

FRANK: Yeah you're right. I'm sorry for calling you those names.

GEORGE: Yeah, Frank, I'm sorry, too. (very excitedly) Now lets run down to the store and get me some tobacco.

FRANK: Yeah and me some wine. (they both began laughing and walk off stage)

As is showing up here, these students are becoming increasingly adept at characterization. And they are learning some conventions of punctuation which will prove useful in making the transition to the next step in the assignment sequence, narrative.

Up to this point, all the writing we have done is in the mode of drama, or recording, the "what is happening" or first level of discourse. And it has come naturally to the students. They understand how their writing has moved out from the inner thoughts of a person to conversation with others, and how a writer prepares a setting in which these conversations take place. Furthermore, without having heard of Aristotle, they sense that a play must have a beginning, a middle, and an end, and that the end needs a special kind of line, or gesture, or movement to give it finality. They have written in dialect, considered costume, stage properties and stage directions, and have imagined themselves as directors giving direction to the actors on stage. Some students include ideas for lighting and sound effects although we do not work with these very much since our main point is learning a mode of discourse, not finished play-writing. For those who are really interested, that can come later in other times. The playlets written in this course are usually quite good for their length, and the skill stays with the writers. At the end of the course, there will be an exam, and I have in my files several good short playlets written as the students' choice of a method of responding to an exam activity. This one came from a picture chosen at random from a pile on the table. The exam instructions were

> Choose a photograph from the stack. Use any technique you have learned during this course and write a piece based on the photograph. You will have 30 minutes.

LET'S BE FRIENDS

This scene takes place in a park. A bench is near a pond and have bloks situated next to it. Two old men are sitting on the park bench where they usually chatter, wearing casual clothes.

GRADY: *Hey, Joe, what are you reading? (peeping over)*

JOE: *Nothing that concerns you. (holding the paper away from him and in a grouchy tone)*

GRADY: *I would like to know what's happening in this world too, you know.*

JOE: *Later! Can't you see I'm reading. Mind your own business.*

GRADY: *Well, I guess I'll sit here and count the blocks. It's better than growing old beside a bullfrog.*

JOE: *Bullfrog! What nerves do you have. I hope you sat here and rot your bottom off. (moves over to the edge of the bench)*

GRADY: *Look Joe, I didn't mean that you know that I run off at the mouth unaware of what I say. Besides, we are too old to get mad at each other. (he slides over toward him) Come on, let's be friends. (they shake hands)*

Having written the short play and presented it before the class, the students are ready for another step in the sequence of assignments. The next step involves a major shift to reporting. This means that the speaker is removed in time and place from his subject and perhaps from his audience as well. As narration begins, the question of point of view enters, and the subject is "what *has* happened" as it is remembered by someone.

We are now at the fourth week of a nine-week course (more or less, depending on how much time we spent on poetry as we wrote the monologues and dialogues and upon how much time we lost to class interruptions and school activities) and ready for assignment number four of the series. This time the teams turn their playlets into short story episodes. In preparation we look through volumes of short stories to notice different ways to begin and observe how the voice is handled. Of course, the first decision will be who is going to tell this story, one of the characters or some outside onlooker? Choices about point of view can be as complex as the class is capable of working with. I try to keep them simple so that narrative technique will not become tangled in subtle shifts and devices. Those can come later with talented writers.

We consider possible ways to open the story, noting that one can begin with description of the setting, with a bit of dialogue, with a bit of

interior monologue, or even with dramatic monologue. Pieces in all of these forms are in the team's folder already from earlier writing. First, I ask them to write a paragraph describing the setting to be added to the folder. In shifting our focus from the stage to the "real" world, the description will need to be more detailed, so we use some exercises in writing description: using action verbs, increasing sensory awareness, and so on. Each team also adds to its folder a descriptive paragraph about each character. With these additions to the source material, they are ready to begin the short story writing. This will take about a week of class to complete.

The dialogue in the play moves naturally into the story, needing only to be punctuated as direct quotation. Converting drama to narrative often makes the conventions of punctuation real and important to students who have not yet mastered them.

As the stories are read to the class, we notice several different openings, different points of view, and good use of description and narration. Most stories are longer and more well-developed than the plays from which they were adapted. Earlier bits of writing appear again in the story.

> *On a hot mucky afternoon in July as the birds sang and squirrels skeeted up and down old oak trees, I slowly walked through the park. Families were having picnics in the shade while some of their little ones slept peacefully. Every once in a while when a cool breeze blew by, the smell of popcorn and candy apples filled the air. Music from the merry-go-round and screams from the roller-coaster mingled in the park. The smell of honeysuckles growing on the fence near the edge of the woods filled the air as I came upon two old women sitting under the old oak tree on a small wooden bench with cracked boards and faded paint. Under this old oak tree is where I got my first kiss from Sally Sue.*
>
> *"Howdy, ladies. I'm suppose to meet an old friend here today. Her name is Sally Sue," I said. "It's sure been a long time since I've seen her—over thirty years, I'd say."*
>
> *Well, are they going to move over; one of them's moving a little bit, the little short lady. She's moving over now. The other lady's beginning to move over, too.*
>
> *"Oh, excuse me, ladies, I forgot to tell you-uns who I am. Well, I'm Hawk Eye Hardy from Hinton, Tennessee. And your names?*
>
> *One of the ladies looked up with a friendly smile and said, "Well, I'm Ethel Coates from Suttles Creek, Georgia. Use to come to this place all the time when Fred and I were younger," she said sadly. I could tell from the look in her eyes the park held precious memories of*

days gone by in her life just like it held for me.

"So you come here every year to this big Fourth of July celebration, I take you're sayin'?"

"No, I don't come as often as I used to. Not since Fred passed away," Ethel said with the sad eyes of a lonely child.

"I still come here every year hopin' to meet my old friend Sally Sue," I said.

Those were the days. Working on the Seacoast, rising and shining bright and early every morning, going from place to place. Sally Sue, a fine gal she was. Prancing around the depot every evening at about five with her parasol, making my heart skip a beat or two. A fine gal she was, but I learned about the good things a little too late.

"Well, what does she look like, this Sally Sue?" Ethel asked with eyes of sympathy.

Coming out of the daze as I heard her say this, my heart began to thump like the old Seacoast did when it chunged down the tracks, my hands began to sweat and my stomach dropped like a school boy's as I said, "Oh, my, she's about your age and today she'll be wearin' a white hat and a yellow corsage."

"I don't believe I've seen her around these parts," Ethel said.

Finally realizing what could be the truth, that time does change things, I said, "Well, do you reckon she went to the wrong place or is she just tryin' to break an old man's heart?"

"Now, she'll probably show up sooner or later. You'll see," Ethel said.

Scanning the park like a lost child looking for his mother, I said, "Glorybe! I do believe I see her over there, I do believe that's her! Thank you, mam, for your help." As I turned and hurried off toward Sally Sue, who seemed to stand out in the crowd, I believe I heard Ethel say, "I hope you-uns have a good time and good luck."

Sally Sue seemed to be so close, but yet so far away as I shouted, "Sally Sue! Sally Sue! It's me. Hawk-Eye Hardy. At your service."

- Jackie Barner
- Marc Lovelace

In class discussion of the techniques used, I try to guide the students to examine the relations between writer and audience and how these relations affect the narrative voice. We look at different ways to begin and the effects these beginnings have on the reader. The class liked one team's sly adaptation of Snoopy's standard opening line, "It was a dark and stormy night." The students' version read, "It was a gray and foggy

night." But the story went on,

> The streets were empty and everyone had turned in for the night. That is, everyone except me and a young black boy I found laying in the alley....

and so on to the surprise ending.

During the final weeks of class, we learn more about poetry, work with images and symbols, and write individual pieces using the techniques we have learned in teams. Narrative poetry comes from chiseling the story down to its central phrases and imagery. Lyric poems come from the many good activity sheets I have gathered through the years and new publications which come in continually.

In the last few class periods, the students read from their portfolios and their classmates rate each piece *one, two,* or *three.* I use these score sheets in final grading.

This dramatic monologue by a senior girl received top marks from every scorer:

MY LUCK RAN OUT

Hey, T-Bone! Man, I've been running into some good luck lately. Why don't we get the brothers and chill out with a game of craps? Well, alright! I'm gonna ease to the corner and put the nail on Bennie, Snake, And PoopJack. Hey, Snake, Bennie! We're gonna throw down on some craps. Were's PoopJack? What? That M.Fers always getting his ass into trouble. I've got the cheba; who got the dice? Snake, what you mean you ain't got no presidents? Well, I'll let you hold Jackson for tonight. And I want my money, or I'll jump down your throat and stomp your liver, 'cause I get mean when you mess with my green! What you mean I can't fight? Man, I've got more moves than a box of exlax.

Lets smoke some rag weed. And I know none of you head hunters are gonna turn this offer down. Yea. I bet. Snake, give me some wraps. You ain't got no wraps, either? Damn, do you have long to live? Well, since we can't smoke none, I guess I'll roll the dice. Put your money down, nickle, dime, quarter, no pennie ante. Okay, brothers, let's go. Momma needs a new pair of shoes! Man, I told you; look at the seven. This is my lucky day.

Man, looky there at that sister. She knows she's got the bod. Hey, Mommie, can I walk with you? Well, hey, sister I was only trying to make you feel good, 'cause everybody knows you're ugly. What you laughing at, T-Bone? You ain't had a babe in months now; don't tell me you're changing on us! Just jiving, just jiving. Come on, let's get with the game and get it over with 'cause you brothers are going to loose

you money. Come on, babies, be good to me! Hot damn! I did it again. Well brothers, what can I say? Cheat! Hell, no! You've got to be tripping on that yang you've been smoking. As long as I've been knowing you niggers, cheat? That's bull. Alright, I'll use Bennie's dice and put all I got down, even my dime bag. Hand me those bones. Come on, bones, show me a sign! What? Snake eyes!

- Wanda Kasime Wallace

Wanda jokingly told her partner as she left class on the last day, "Well, I won't have anything to come to school for now. I only came because of this class." But she is still writing and has much more to look forward to in the future.

Another favorite was this simple poetic expression of an inner voice by a senior boy:

I wish
I could turn back
time
and go back
to when my grandfather was alive
So I could see him once more
just once more.

- Ted Mayes

Add to these the fun we had with an old stand-by:

THE GREEN CHALK BOARD

So much depends
upon
A green chalk
board
Covered with writing
assignments
Against the yellow
wall.

- Jamie Brackett

THE ORANGE TRASH CAN

So much depends
upon
an orange trash
can
filled with crumpled
paper
before the writing
class.

- Doug Simmons

And Anne's wistful little lyric spoke for all of us in the class:

I wish
life were
a fairy tale
beginning
at the
very end.

- Anne McDowell

By October, I had come to love these young writers, as I always do. I gave them my own last gift of words:

In My Writing Class

It seems a long time since we came together,
And now it's time to go.
We have seen the summer pass
and watched the Fall come in.

And, like the leaves, we changed,
finding in ourselves a secret brightness
that was hid before in common green.

Two-by-two we showed our colors to each other;
then, letting go, we gathered with our fellows
in a brilliant heap against the wall.

Like the autumn leaves, we learned to rest together,
touching each other with our words.

Some are restless still, whispering, rasping,
turning, tumbling –
stirred by their private, unseen winds.

But most are quietly resting, safe and secure
in their own places,
Ready to yield their brilliant colors
to the radiance of the pile.

Nature has its secret wisdom,
Changing leaves from green and gold,
And bringing them to rest together
nestled quietly in this brilliant heap;
For all the world is enriched by color,
and every life is rounded with a sleep.

Now it's time to say Good night,
we leaves, all gathered here together,
And let our sickness work for other leaves,
Showing them what colors lie unseen

Until Time and Nature draw them
from within.

– Dixie Dellinger
October 23, 1980

II

From Fiction to Exposition

We said good-bye that October, with the same reluctance with which other creative writing classes have parted in other years. Many times I meet the students again in other classes and see them use some writing technique that they learned in their creative writing class. So I knew there must be a way to connect this writing sequence with other types of writing for other purposes, perhaps even in other subject areas besides English. Indeed, I was already at work on a composition course based on the same sequence.

But before I discuss that course, let me tell something of the way it came about. To back-track a little, the creative writing course I have just outlined first worked out that way in 1978. I then taught it again twice in 1979, with each class producing the same successful results. But the old dilemma remained of how to connect this kind of writing to the essay, the research paper, or even to the kinds of report-writing assignments students might expect in the future. At our school, the creative writing course is part of the mini-course curriculum in which most of the average students are enrolled. College-bound students, for the most part, are enrolled in advanced courses and do not take the creative writing course. In the advanced courses, the old high-wire act often had me wildly flailing the air in search of my balance.

Occasionally, I had the advanced students try writing some of the same assignments that the creative writing course did, with fairly good results. Both they and I were unsure of how these pieces related to the more formal exposition and argumentation modes that were considered necessary for them, so with the demands of literature study and formal composition we could never spare the time to try to follow through. Perhaps we would still be doing our aerial tilting act had I not become involved in the Writing Project at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. At some point we were discussing the theories of James Moffett with which I had already spent much time. The Project director, Dr. Sam Watson, commented that a writer could move from narration to exposition at *any* point in the sequence. Click, I thought, now I have it:

I will develop some strategies to move from the fiction-writing sequence I already have worked out into exposition and argument.

As Frank D'Angelo points out in "Modes of Discourse" (*Teaching Composition: 10 Bibliographical Essays*), the modes must not be thought of as unchangeable and immutable archetypes. Though Moffett speaks of "levels of abstraction" in describing the "spectrum of discourse" (p. 47), it is important to understand that these are not levels in a hierarchy of *value*. The tacit assumption that exposition and argument are somehow more valuable than drama and narrative underlies the statement that I once heard a teacher of gifted students make: "We do not have time for creative writing. We have our literary essays to write and I do not have time to teach creative writing." This statement implies that argumentation, preferably in literary criticism, is the highest mode of discourse for advanced students. On the constrary, all of the levels have value in writing instruction, and each level is important to the sequence of assignments presented in this paper.

James Kinneavy's scheme (*A Theory of Discourse*, 1971, p. 61) adds much to the Moffett model, as he classifies the modes of discourse further as expressive, literary, referential and persuasive. He also gives examples of each of these from everyday use. My own vision of the relationships of the four modes represented in the Moffett scheme is something like Yeats' gyres, a sort of spiral rising and widening and then descending to begin again with another topic or subject. The center is affective and intimate in its voice and thought, and if this center does not hold, things often fall apart on the outer edges of exposition and argument. (See Figure 1)

It seemed that an approach to teaching composition could be planned to move from the heart of recording the "here and now" to narrative and to information writing and finally to persuasion, then back to the beginning again.

I looked through my files to find some writing to begin with. At the end of a creative writing class the previous year, two students had left their team folder behind. Both were average students, a boy and a girl who had not even wanted to work together at the beginning. Their first photograph was also the old man in the seedy black hat with the cigar stub in his mouth. They had also treated him as a "wine-o." Here is the interior monologue:

> *I am going to get me a bottle of wine and have a good ole time. Maybe it'll ke[illegible] warm, because it sure is cold out here. Wonder why everyone is [illegible]ing at me? Am I that terrible looking. It won't be long until I'll have to find me another cigar. Maybe I can find a job and see if I can get some new clothes and things. Times are real hard nowadays down here in the city. The kids will rip you off for anything*

that they can. I better hurry across the street before I get hit. I wish my wife hadn't died then I would have had someone to talk to. Now she's gone and I'm all alone out here in this old world trying to make it. I guess things could be worse if I don't try to look after myself a little bit.

The Widening Gyres of Discourse

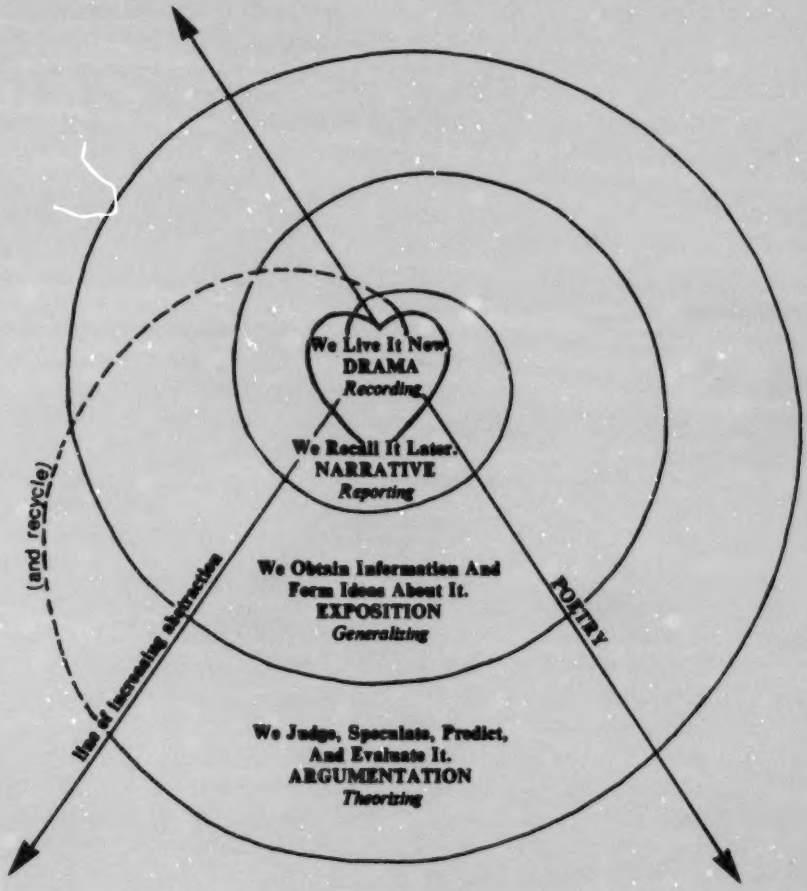

Figure 1

In the dramatic monologue, he spoke to a gimlet-eyed fellow with a stubbly beard, wearing striped overalls and a cap slightly askew. Behind him were the boards of an old shanty.

Hey there! How are you doing? Looks like you've had a hard time like me. Things are just the same with me, too. Are you doing any good on the farm these days? . . . You say the crops are getting better and better? Do you have any more of that homemade booze, because I was just about to be on my way to buy some, but I'd rather have some country kind. . . . Now, I think as I can get some money I'll come. It's really hard on me down here because I'm use to doing farm work instead of walking around in the city, looking like an old bum. . . . I see you as soon as I can get me a way up there. You be good, too.

Their play developed some interesting characterizations:

GOING TO THE FARM

CAST

JOHN FORD: *a cityman, dressed in black suit, cigar in his mouth, gray hat on his head, looks as if he hasn't shaved in a month.*

TUCK DAVIS: *a farmer, dirty overalls, dirty white shirt, looks as if he hasn't shaved in a month, wears blue and white striped hat and ragged pair of boots.*

SETTING

A bank on the street corner stage left with a street light on the corner. An old beat-up truck in front of the bank stage right.

TUCK: *(Walks out of the bank with a box in his hand full of money, looks around and smiles, sees his old friend John Ford.) Well, John, what are you doing down here? I haven't seen you in five years!*

JOHN: *Well, if it's not ole man Tuck Davis! How's it been going with you and the farm?*

TUCK: *It's been going pretty fair. I was just in the bank to borrow some money so I could build me a new barn.*

JOHN: *It hasn't been going so good with me since I lost my job.*

TUCK: *It sure is the same with me, too. I can't get situated here now either, since Martha died about two year ago.*

JOHN: *It really hit me hard when I lost my job and my old lady. I was working at a school as a custodian until they found out that I was drinking every day.*

TUCK: *(looking surprised) Well, John, I guess we all feel that way, but when my old lady died on me I tried to forget it within a next few days so that I could continue to be my old regular self.*

JOHN: *(shocked) Tuck, you see, it wasn't that way with me. I*

felt sick all the time. And actually I still hurt a little bit now, but I try not to show it. I really don't see how you overcome it so fast. I loved my old lady.

TUCK: *Martha and I never had that much to say, really, because I was mostly out on the farm working so we would have something to eat in the winter.*

JOHN: *Well, I see.*

TUCK: *Yeah, that was the way it worked between the both of us.*

JOHN: *You know, since my old lady left me, my life has been a total disaster. I don't have no place to stay but a boarding house in the alley. It seems as if I have to look for my food just about every day. But nothing is better than my old bottle. Say, Tuck. Do you have any of that homemade booze over your way?*

TUCK: *Well, let me see. John, I was looking for someone to help out on the farm since I just about can't handle things. I was just wondering . . . would you be interested?*

JOHN: *(overwhelmed) Oh. I'd be glad to help you, Tuck, in any way I can.*

(Both men turn stage right and start walking toward the old truck.)

TUCK: *(Reaches for the door) I'm glad that you said that. You're coming to help me on the farm.*

JOHN: *If there is anything I can do for Tuck Davis, I want to help any way I can. You know, it's good to know you have a friend in the country to depend upon.*

(The old truck clatters off the stage with Tuck and John in it, riding merrily.)

And their short story began this way:

GOING TO THE FARM

I was walking down the sidewalk one day with the wind blowing against my face. I was just thinking of an old friend that I hadn't seen in five whole years. Boy, did we have good times together. It used to be the good old days for him and me.

Suddenly, I decided to turn at the next corner, thinking maybe it'll be a short cut. I got around the corner and saw an old familiar blue truck. I thought to myself that looks like Tuck Davis's truck. I was going to stand around to see whether or not it was his, but before I turned around I heard someone come out of the bank.

It was Tuck, yeah, old Tuck Davis coming out of the bank with a

box in his hand. He looked around and smiled when he saw me and said, "Well, John, What are you doing down here? I haven't seen you in five year."

"Well, if it's not ole man Tuck Davis! I was just thinking about you. How's it been going with you and the farm?" I said.

"It's been going pretty fair. I was just in the bank to borrow some money so I could build me a new barn."

"It hasn't been going so good with me since I lost my job," I said.

"It sure is the same with me. I can't get situated here now ever since Martha died about two year ago."

"It really hit me hard when I lost my job and my old lady. I was working at school as a custodian until they found out that I was drinking every day."

He look surprised. "Well, John," he said, "I guess we all feel that way. But when my old lady died on me, I tried to forget it within the next few days, so that I could continue to be my old regular self."

I was shocked but I said, "Tuck, you see it wasn't that way with me. I felt sick all the time and actually I hurt a little now, but now I really don't see how you overcame it so fast. I loved my old lady."

"Martha and I never really had that much to say because I was mostly out on the farm working, so we would have something to eat in the winter."

"Well. I see now."

"Yeah. That was the way it worked between the both of us."

(and so on)

Finally, a narrative poem:

A FRIEND

walking down the sidewalk
wind blowing against my face
thinking of an old friend

turning the corner
a familiar old blue truck
a smile of recognition

"How's it been with you?"
we said together
"The old lady's gone"
we said together

"It's bad"
we said together
"I need help"
we said together

turning a corner
in the old blue truck
we left together

so good to have a friend to depend upon.

This excellent movement through the first two modes of discourse by students who had not been particularly interested in writing and were, academically, only average students shows how much authentic control over voice and tone and style can be developed in a short while. To move away from fiction into exposition here would be an obvious step; with some research, a paper could be written about the decline of the family farm in America. Better still, in the rural area where our school is located are many family farms now going out of operation which would make good subjects for real, on-the-spot research. There are ideas inherent in this sequence about urban problems, about alcoholism, about old age, death, and loneliness, and so on and so on. Not only these expository topics leap out from the fiction, but some argumentative approaches as well. When a man is down and out, is it better to be in the city or the country? What can be done to save the small farm? Should the small farm be saved at all? Had this been a class of college-bound students, or a class in general composition, there would be plenty of connections to the sort of writing that we teachers believe we should be assigning to prepare students for their future writing tasks. Furthermore, the progression from intimate thoughts and egocentric speech outward to the public, distant voice of exposition and argument would be personally meaningful and logical. At that time, I thought it would also be easy.

That is what I told the Writing Project when I presented the creative writing approach to them and illustrated it with the students' work above. The Project directors, Drs. Sam Watson and Leon Gatlin, were astounded that these students who had written so well were not intending to go to college. "This is the kind of writer we would be overjoyed to see in a freshman class," they said. That did help me to feel a bit more of a sense of balance on that high-wire. While preparing for the presentation on my application of Moffett's theory, I had tried one short sequence with the Advanced Placement class as a brief experiment. We were reading *Othello,* so I based the sequence on the concept of jealousy. Here are the assignments:

Sequence of Writing Assignments Coordinated with the Study of *Othello*

Assignment 1. Write an interior monologue of 2-3 pages recording a moment of intense jealousy. You may draw from personal experience or create a fictional persona and situation.

Assignment 2. Write a dramatic monologue in which the experience recorded in the previous assignment is reported to someone else at a later time.

Assignment 3. Write an article or essay which generalizes upon the subject of jealousy, what it is and how it affects people. You may deal with general experience or you may write about the play.

Assignment 4. Write an essay or article which develops a theory about jealousy. You may use the play as a base or draw upon general experience. You may wish to consider such questions as

Is jealousy different in male and female?

Is Iago's motive also jealousy?

Why do you suppose the Seven Deadly Sins did not include jealousy but did include envy?

In the future, as men and women become more equal, will jealousy decline in intensity?

Regardless of how "public" the writing will be at the end of the sequence, the beginning will be private and affective. It engages the student on the feeling level and moves him out in a series of cognitive steps which involve increasing degrees of abstraction, using a variety of writing skills at the same time.

The assignments outlined here are given with the option of writing from personal experience or from the imagination, choices which seem dissimilar. The point of the beginning assignment is in the use of voice, beginning with the closest, most personal mode of discourse—interior monologue. Moffett says, "The starting point of teaching discourse is 'drama'...While acknowledging that artificiality cannot be eliminated completely from the classroom situation, somehow we must create more realistic communication 'dramas' in which the student can practice being a first and second person...." (p. 12) Though Moffett suggests beginning with students' personal experience, I find that students in high school are able to write well from a range of experiences, some their own life experiences and others that they "know" from observation or imaginative

power. For many, especially those with low self-confidence as writers, the best beginning is to pretend to be someone else, to learn that they can write fluently and easily with an authentic voice, and to expand their often narrow vision of life by looking at the world through the eyes of another "somebody" which they create. Some students move into writing for the class group much more willingly and more ready to learn from the group from such a beginning. Others, for whatever personal reasons, are eager to write from their own experience at the beginning and an option allows that choice. My objective is for the student to gain some control over his discourse and to like writing for its own sake, and if he wishes to place himself at the start "outside his own skin," that is fine with me. He certainly can find plenty of company on the pages of books, for few of the writers he will be asked to read are working entirely autobiographically.

Here are some excerpts from the first and third assignments, written by a senior girl who shortly afterward scored the top score of *5* on the Advanced Placement Examination in Literature and Composition. She was exempted from the freshman composition semester at the university and entered an honors writing course instead.

Assignment 1.

College Day. College. I can't wait. I won't have to see him any more. I won't have to see her any more. Better yet, I won't have to see him and her together any more.

Oh, no! She's wearing his letter jacket! It looks so baggy and ugly on her! Just look at that. She thinks she's really something. Look at her strut around the gym with her hands in the pockets. Are they still full of Kleenex and junk? But no, he didn't care about that when I wore it.

Yes, you hussy, I see you! You can quit parading by me now. I know, and I don't care. . . .

Assignment 3.

JEALOUSY AND ENVY

Envy is that small, annoying little prick I feel when Sue's going-steady ring flashes before my eyes, or when one of the waitresses I work with makes twice as many tips as I do. Envy is watching my ten-year-old sister bound out onto the gym floor to take her starting guard position on the basketball team. I envy strangers—the petite blonde thumbing through the size 5's at Jordan's, the girls on the cover of Seventeen magazine, and Bo Derrick. The objects of my envy have taken nothing from me. They, or their possessions, are sources for dreams and aspirations. My envy is a form of admiration.

Jealousy, on the other hand, is that searing, all-consuming stab

that rips my inside every time that girl walks by with my former boyfriend. It's the injustice I feel when my sun-tan is every bit as dark as my best friend's, yet hers is noticed more because brown shows up better with blonde hair. Jealousy is the fear that I will lose her friendship when she begins spending more time with a new girl in town. I am jealous when I have been threatened, and when I have been robbed of something I feel that I rightfully deserve. I am jealous when I cannot have what I believe is within my reach but is jerked away by another. These people represent harsh, unfair reality. I respond to them with burning agression.

While evaluating my feelings of jealousy and envy, I realize that I am not jealous or envious of males. This is because, realistically, I cannot be like them. I am not competing with them for popularity, hair styles, or dates. I'm a firm believer in the saying, "Every woman wants what every other woman has."

Envy may be contained, suppressed, and periodically forgotten. Jealousy becomes a burning obsession. While envy may be constructive, making me strive harder to reach a goal, jealousy is destructive, provoking me to seek revenge for my loss....

We tried a sequence with *Hamlet,* also, but did not get to finish all the papers due to other interruptions in the class.

Sequence of Writing Assignments Coordinated with the Study of *Hamlet*

Assignment 1. **Recall some experience in which you knew that something should be done, yet you hesitated. Then write a series of four letters or diary entries in which you reveal this instance and reflect back upon it later. (You may use personal experience or create a fictional situation.)**

Assignment 2. **Recall what Hamlet says as he is dying:**

> **You that look pale and tremble at this chance,**
> **Had I but time,**
> **O, I could tell you. But let it be.**
>
> **Horatio, I am dead;**
> **Thou livest; report me and my cause aright**
> **To the unsatisfied.**
>
> **(Act V, ii, 344-351)**

Choose ONE of the following assignments:

1. **You are Hamlet and you have the time. Set**

down what you will say to those that look pale and tremble at what they have seen.

2. You are Horatio. Report Hamlet and his cause aright to the unsatisfied.

Assignment 3. Reflect upon the factors which cause people to hesitate when they know that something needs to be done. What causes them to hesitate?

Write an essay or article presenting your personal theory about the psychology of hesitation. You may refer to *Hamlet* and quote passages to illustrate your points, if you wish.

The beginning pieces were quite good. The same girl wrote a series of letters about hesitating to befriend a retarded boy in an incident on a school bus. Her letters included one from the boy to his teacher and another from an onlooker at the scene. Other students brought out many examples of hesitation in their compositions. As we read the play and discussed our papers, we developed some valuable theories about the psychology of hesitation—that we hesitate out of fear of the opinions of others, out of doubt that the act will be effective, out of doubt that it is really necessary—and we reached a final conclusion that hesitation is born of self-doubt. I wish we had written those papers! We learned so much while watching Hamlet hesitate.

III

Writing About Literature

What I have related thus far has been about average students, in the main. I have only touched on possible writing activities for advanced students. I am still working on composition components correlated with literature studies and I am not ready to put these forward yet. At this point, I believe the best way to work out such a correlation is to use the same four-step sequence and base the assignments on the theme of the literature being studied. First, create a recording or reporting assignment (either personal or fictional) recalling an experience related to the theme. Then move to a more general assignment which asks students to bring together many such experiences (or to draw upon the reading they have been doing) and to reach a conclusion about them. They will write in a more formal voice and address a less intimate audience in this paper. Finally, create an assignment which asks them to speculate or to predict or to evaluate. Ask them to think about why? what would happen if? what could have caused? what should have been done? all the sorts of questions that call for theorizing and argumentation.

For example, the following series of writing activities might work well with John Steinbeck's *The Pearl.* (I have not tried them so cannot say with certainty what might result).

> Assignment 1. Recall when you were a child and had some precious possessions. Use the technique of recording or reporting and tell us about one of these possessions and what happened to it.

Then, after hearing the papers and discussing part of the book:

> Assignment 2. Think about the kinds of possessions that are important to children and group them into categories. Write an essay about children and their precious possessions and about how their ideas change as they grow up.

As the novel is read, discussions can move to the symbolism of the pearl and comparisons of material possessions to abstract treasures like the family love and tranquillity, which was lost when the pearl was found. The final assignment could ask the students to develop a theory about

what the novel says concerning the real "pearls" of life, or about what the student considers the real "pearls" in his own life. And so on.

A sequence of assignments like those above is much more appropriate, I believe, than the sort of literary criticism we too often ask for. The problem inherent in the critical approach was put into focus by Ethel Heins:

> C.S. Lewis once said that he knew of no better way to turn children against books than to pull responses from them. . . . Literary dissection and tortured analogies by children too young to engage in criticism can be terribly defeating. Helen Gardner, the Oxford professor, wrote, "The attempt to train young people in this kind of discrimination seems to me to be a folly, if not a crime. The young need, on the one hand, to be encouraged to read for themselves, widely, voraciously, and indiscriminately; and, on the other, to be helped to read with more enjoyment and understanding what their teachers have found to be of value." But this needs to be done without forcing pitifully inept judgments; the natural responses of children will grow more sophisticated as they mature. ("From Reading to Literacy," *Today's Education*, April/May, 1980, p. 46 G.)

I try to keep that passage before my mind's eye when I am tempted to dash off an essay topic like "Discuss the elements of Impressionism in *The Red Badge of Courage*." Instead, we made lists of what *courage* is when you are six years old, when you are sixteen, and when you are sixty. After that, we wrote about what courage means to each of us and what it meant to Henry Fleming and how he found out that meaning. We also compared his thoughts with those of "Knowlt Hoheimer" in *Spoon River Anthology:*

KNOWLT HOHEIMER*

I was the first fruits of the battle of Missionary Ridge.
When I felt the bullet enter my heart
I wished I had stayed home and gone to jail
For stealing the hogs of Curl Trenary,
Instead of running away and joining the army.
Rather a thousand times the county jail
Than to lie under this marble figure with wings.
And this granite pedestal
Bearing the words, "Pro Patria."
What do they mean, anyway?

-Edgar Lee Masters

* From *Spoon River Anthology*, Macmillan, 1924. Reprinted by permission of Ellen C. Masters.

Assignment:

Study the poem and examine what Masters is saying about war and patriotism.

Then:

1. Write your own extended definition of what true courage is.
2. Compare Knowlt Hoheimer with Henry Fleming and sum up the attitudes toward courage shown in Crane's novel and Masters' poem.
3. Write a poem like this poem, following the style and line length, imagining the speaker to be one involved in the next war,

OR

Write a poem like this, imagining yourself as a casualty in any war of the past.

For further enrichment:

Write a poem like this about anything you ever did, or can imagine doing, that you later changed your mind about and wished you had done differently.

Last spring the first responses to this assignment were serious and thoughtful as well as original. Then the fun began and all sorts of parodies emerged.

Sonicjoe Superson

I was the first fruits of the battle
of Sonic Plateau.
When I felt the wave of electron
volts enter my body,
I wished I had stayed home and
gone to Jupiter
To build a nuclear plant in the sky.
Instead of acting brave and joining
the Armed Forces of Earth.
Rather a thrillion times desolate
Jupiter,

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Than to lie quickly dematerializing
under this sun-infested bubble,
And this fiberglass sign
Bearing the words, "Rohoh ni
DezTlairetamed"
What do they mean, anyway?

-Darlene Costner

Auntie Dardendean

I was the first fruits of the battle
of neices vs. nephews.
When I heard them coming
I wished I had gone to the
dentist's office
To have 3 root canals, 5 fillings,
and 2 more teeth pulled,
Instead of coming home to
face this massacre
Rather 10 million times that
horrible pain
Than to lie here under this
screaming crowd of kids,
And this mutilated pile of boards
that used to be a house
Fallen, under the weight of
"10 kids and one poor dead aunt"
What did I ever do to them
anyway?

-Darlene Costner

Thoreau's *Walden* is heady stuff for high school juniors, and it must have been a crashing jolt, ten years ago, for my students to be handed this assignment:

> Demonstrate the rebirth theme as being central to the philosophy of *Walden* and show how the structure of the work demonstrates this theme.

I shudder to think of the results. (I have forgotten now where I put those papers.) Now, we have four writing activities while we are reading instead of one big paper at the end.

Writing Assignments: *Walden*

Assignment 1.

(After reading Chapter 1). Write an extended definition of the word "Economy" using your personal experience and ideas about the word.

Assignment 2.

(After reading Chapter 2). Write a short chapter for your own "book" and call it "Where I Lived and What I Lived For." Place yourself at some time in the future and look back on yourself today.

Assignment 3.

(After Chapter 3). Complete the Correlatives list, using "Solitude" as the abstraction. Then do these two activities:

1. Choose one or more of your images which can be made into existential sentences.
2. Select one image in your correlatives and expand it and shape it into a poem about solitude.

Assignment 4.

(After finishing your reading). Do the "Walking Out of Myself" activity in either prose or poetry. (Handout).

A List of Correlatives

Abstraction: Solitude

COLOR - green, brown, gray
SMELL - pine needles, forest earth
TASTE -
SOUND - sighing of pines, brown thrush song
TEXTURE - springy, like moss
SHAPE -

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OBJECT -
ANIMAL - brown, thrush
FOOD - cold biscuit
BEVERAGE - water from the spring
CLOTHING - scuffed overalls
PLACE OR SETTING - slope facing south
FLOWER - Ladys Slipper
WEATHER -
COUNTRY -
BUILDING OR STRUCTURE - shack, weathered boards
CAR OR OTHER VEHICLE -
MUSIC -
PAINTING OR SCULPTURE -
LITERARY WORK - Walden

Ways to expand this:

A poem about Solitude
An essay on the nature of_____
A play with_____as a character
A story which shows_____
Descriptions which evoke_____
Existential sentences:_____is . . .
Personification, apostrophe, image, metaphor, aphorism, definition
A painting, drawing, sculpture, photograph, dance

I am indebted to Jay Jacoby of UNCC for the Correlatives List with its possibilities for expansion. With *Walden,* we used the option of a poem on solitude. I told the students about my uncle Bob, who was a kind of Thoreau without a book to show for it, and about how I used to wonder what he was thinking as he sat in the sun on the slope below his shack.

SOUTH SLOPE

Where once only crisp gray lichens
clutched at the cold earth,
Soft moss now greenly cushions the slope
for the young pine seedlings
Flung there by Nature's profligacy.

One day, when the mossy bank is thick
layered in their discard,
A springy brown richness yielding
pungent fragrance upward
to the warm spring sun,
I will lie there.

I will lie there in a long morning,
feel the quietness enter at my fingertips,
Feel it flow through my veins
inward to my heart and mind,
And I will be at rest there;
Soothed by the solitude,
Drawn upward, lifted
by the sun.

-D. Dellinger, March, 1980

My poem is not great, but they watched my struggle with writing and shaping it while they struggled with their own, and we felt the same pride in the finished work.

The final activity with *Walden* is a real transcendental experience, adapted form Frances Goldwater's "Students Walk Out" *(They Really Taught Us How to Write,* pp. 55-57).

A Transcentental Experience: "Walking Out of Myself"

WALKING OUT*
by Stanley Plumly

I would walk out of this flesh,
leave the whole body of my bones.
If I could, I would undress utterly.

I would be silence. Even the sleeves
of my best coat would not know me.
I would write my name in cold blood

by a candle whose flame would be fire,
air, breath, everything, including paper.
I would be totally absent from myself,

from thoughts of myself; I would forget
myself entirely. I would go out only
at night, naked and perpetually catching

cold, and, in fear of footprints, walk
on my hands. They would think five-toed bird
and at the edge of water imagine flight.

But I would still be walking, if I could,
out of body, leaving behind, in a wake
of absence, clothes, fingerprints, words.

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Walk out of yourself. **Then do either 1 or 2 below in either poetry or prose.**

1. ***Look at what you left behind.*** **Examine the clues you have abandoned to the ones following you. What could another make of the habits, memories, thoughts, words, possessions that were once you? Detail the fragments from which a persona must reconstruct the person you were.**
2. ***You are free now.*** **Take us where you would like to go, unseen, unfelt. Take yourself and us out of place, out of mind, out of time. What is it like and what do you discover?**

And an example:

I STEP OUT

I step out of the glove
that encases my soul;
I leave behind the image
of my being.
I slowly travel from
place to place,
Yet I don't exist.

I explore the outermost
regions of your mind,
But you do not know
I am there.
My experiences are those
you can only dream of;
I feel a tingle as I
flit through space and time.

I have no definite form;
I am what I choose to be.

-Kris Canipe

I am using the pronoun "we" in this paper because I am a participant and a learner as well as teacher in the writing class. I begin where the students begin with an activity and write along with them, taking time out to help them or give instructions. We discuss the problems that emerge as we work on the assignment. From doing this, I have learned that even when an activity is not new to me, the changed moods and conditions will produce something different each time. I never tire of

writing with the students, as I certainly would if I had to write the "Rebirth" paper I mentioned earlier. It seems to me a good test of an activity if the teacher can come to it a second or third time herself and still be fresh and willing to write. I will have more to say about planning assignments later on. (see p. 61) As for the value of writing together in the classroom, Macrorie has noted the positive effects on truthtelling when the room becomes silent except for the scratching of pens as the voices in our heads begin to speak to us (*Searching Writing*, p. 9).

I once heard Charles Feinberg tell about how he came to his life-long interest in Walt Whitman. He said he had read "There Was A Child Went Forth" when he was a small boy and the poem had impressed him so much that it shaped his life. Now, in my class we no longer write essays on the three symbols in "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloomed," even when we recognize them. Instead, we write an assignment using Whitman's style, which produces wonderful personal reflections. First I read "There Was A Child Went Forth" aloud, then I give the assignment:

> Copy down the first four lines just as Whitman wrote them, but change the pronoun if you are female. Then finish the poem with details from your own "going forth," following Whitman's style and form.

This one almost took my breath away when I first read it:

THERE WAS A CHILD WENT FORTH

There was a child went forth every day,
And the first object she look'd upon, that object she became,
And that object became part of her for the day or a certain part of the day,
Or for many years or stretching cycles of years.

The sunshine became part of this child,
And red mud and the stream, and the old steel bridge, and the long dirt road,
And the big brown dog and the new-born kittens, and the chicks,
And the black and white rocking horse,
And the slamming of the creaky screen door,
And the ringing of the big church bell, all became part of her.

The wild onions of the open field became part of her,
And the feathered dandelion blossoms, and the buttercups,
And the fragrant smell of spring, and the blossoms on the apple trees that blow away with the wind,

And the sour crab apples that made her mouth pucker,
And the ribbons and bows, and the shiny new shoes for Easter,
And the kool-aid and crackers, and the bright red swings,
And the "Pledge of Allegiance",
And the stick cross and the red clover blossoms on the cat's grave,
And all the new friends she made.

Her own parents, he that protected her and she that smothered her with love and cared for her,
They gave this child security and happiness,
They gave her their time and patience, they became part of her.

The mother at home, kissing the hurt and making it better,
The mother with a tender smile, a soft scent of perfume denoting her presence,
The father, strong, manly, important,
The loud voice, the valid answer, the last word,
The family, the house, the rooms, the relatives, the closeness,
Protection from the outside world, the sense of security, the thought if after all it should prove safe only for the moment,
The hurts of yesterday and those of today, the curious why and how,
Why do the hurts heal so slowly, or do they really heal at all?
Men and women crowded around her, is she protected from them?
The people themselves and their attitudes, and the surroundings,
Smiles, frowns, the carefree children, the hurry-scurry from place to place,
Streets, stores and empty lots, the seldom-moving train seen from afar,
The new businesses being built, the old buildings being torn down,
The fast moving cars, the piercing horns, the exhaust-filled air,
The puffy clouds, the vast mountains' linament, the endless beauty surrounding her,
The horizon's edge, the flying blackbirds, the fragrance of freshly mowed grass,
These became part of that child who went forth every day, and who now goes, and will always go forth every day.

-Sandra Pendleton

And this young man not only knows something about Whitman, he knows profound things about himself, his epistemology and his place in the Universe:

"There was a child went forth every day,
And the first thing he looked upon, that object he became
And that object became part of him for the day or a certain part of the day
Or for many years or stretching cycles of years."

The honeysuckle was part of him
And the long summer days, and the Indian summer
And the sounds of the crickets, and the April blue sky
And the fresh scent of rain, and the wet grass,
And the March flowers and the new spring bud.

The sunshine and clouds became part of him
And the morning dew, and the gold of sunset
And the multi-spectra rainbow that leaped from the heart of the mountain
And the pink of the sunrise
And the dusk, and dawn, and night
And the wind.

The lightning and thunder he became
And the fear of the storm,
And the insecurity of the world
And the war, and the hunger and disease
And the poor and weak, and the dying
All of this became a part of him.
Also the lonely howling of the dogs at night
And the winter snow,
And the preacher, and Hellfire and damnation
And religion, and peace, and love
And God.

The music became part of him,
The rhythmn, the tempo, the time,
And the key, and the chords,
And the staccato, and the forte,
And the tone, the crescendo and the decrescendo, the piano
And the band, and the orchestra, the opera, the song, the entertainment,
The beauty, the dance, and the grace
And sound.

He became a structure; a house
A fence, a barn; He became the fireplace and the fire
And the sound of the train passing
And of its horn interrupting the silence
And the jet flying overhead,
And the trucks on the interstate.

All of this he became, and all of this he is,
Till he's gone, or life's gone
Or man is gone,
Until the earth's age is ended.

-Johnny Anderson

What more could we ask of a seventeen-year-old?

I have included these examples of writing approaches to the study of literature, not because I think they are ideal, or even because they illustrate the application of Moffett's theory to composition about literature. I put them in to argue that students who can write this well in these modes are not being deprived of anything necessary by not writing the conventional term paper on The Life and Times of Somebody or the quasi-critical paper that often gets cribbed from *Cliff's* without the literature even being read.

IV

From Recording to Theorizing

The assignments based on literature had begun to make me think I had found my balance on that tight-rope and was ready to start putting one foot before the other to see how far I could carry the pole before it tipped me off on one side or the other. Having gone this far in working out writing activities related to the recording-reporting-generalizing-theorizing sequence, and having had some successful results with all levels of students, I wanted to plan a complete composition course using the same progression. At our school, we saw a need for a semester course in composition and grammar for eleventh graders and some seniors who may not have fully decided on college at that point, but who wanted more preparation in writing. (Of course, some just needed the course credit.) We decided to try to put into this course some of the workshop methods in editing and revising that we had learned about through the UNCC Writing Project and to structure the writing assignments around the sequence I have outlined thus far.

The first class reported in September, twenty-three juniors and nine seniors. On the first day, I asked them to respond to some questions about writing and to write a short paragraph about something interesting in their lives. From this writing sample, I learned that this class was *not* what we call "homogeneous." Many expressed a dislike or fear of writing, concerns for "not having anything to say," having trouble getting started, always postponing a writing task, preferring the telephone to a written message, and other attitudes that identify the reluctant writer. From their sample paragraphs, I learned that several students had not learned the rudiments of grammar, punctuation, or spelling, and certainly showed no evidence of understanding any particular writing skill. I mention these factors now and note that this paper will not deal with methods used to work on remedial skills; it will concentrate instead on the development of writing alone. Each student did carry out an individualized program to help with his own errors in mechanics and usage, but that process is not the point of this account. The student writing samples which appear in the remainder of the paper have been edited for spelling and punctuation only, not for sentence structure, expression, or content.

Our single continuing objective for composition was this:

> The student will improve his ability to write effectively for varied purposes by developing a sense of voice and audience and improving his control over point-of-view, tone, and style.

When the students copied this objective down in their notebooks, most of the questions came from the terms used. "What do you mean by voice?" "What is point-of-view?" and "What do you mean by audience?" Others were, "Do we have to diagram sentences? I never could do that." "Do we have to pass any tests?" "We won't have to read what we write out loud, will we?" But they spotted the verb "improve" very quickly. "Does that mean if we improve, we pass?" I didn't mind saying "Yes" to that.

Next, the students copied the Moffett table (see p. 94), and I told them that I wanted them to memorize it because it described what we would be writing in the class. For this course, we had planned to use editing and revising processes and to form writing groups. We would use Bruce Lockerbie's text *Purposeful Writing* because it deals with voice, audience, tone, style, and attitude. I chose some different photographs from the "Eye Openers" set to begin with. Several action photographs from sports—horse racing, motocross, basketball, hang gliding, football, running, auto racing—fit with the opening activities in Lockerbie's book and gave us a good beginning assignment:

> Assignment 1. Recording. Look at the photograph. Pretend you are the announcer at this sports event. Write one page of what you are saying at this moment.

The following day, we formed groups of students who had chosen to write about the same photograph and read the papers aloud to the group. Each group selected one they considered very good in its use of voice and tone, and the writer recopied it for the classroom display, asking the group for help in spelling or punctuation if needed. The writing for this assignment was very good, probably reflecting the interests of the students and their familiarity with sports broadcasting. In our discussion, we noticed that the voice of the announcer differs in different sports; for example, golf is quiet, and basketball is full of tension and excitement. The assignment brought the sound of a voice into prominence, and it gave the students confidence in their ability to write well and earn the commendation of their classmates.

> *... Petty's coming out of the back turn. Oh no he's spinning around, he hits the wall, flames, smoke coming out of car 43, one of his tires is rolling across the track! Is he all right, someone from pit crew of Petty's please help clean up the sheet metal, oil on the third turn and get*

that tire up! Everyone please get back from the guard rail! The race officials are checking over the track for any loose materials that may cause another wreck. Ladies and gentleman three cars of the front runners have been total lossed. Soon the race will be back under way. They're lining up, here they come! Folks, we're back to racing! Yar, Barker, Allison are your three cars to watch today. Folks, it's going to be a very tough race, this year's cars are all class. Race car officials has a new rule—no tire changes under the caution. They are trying to cut down on tire prices.

- Kevin Stroud

The fourth day's writing was another approach to recording. Using the same photograph, the assignment was

> Assignment 2. Recording. Look at the photograph. Pretend that you are that player or participant at that very moment. Write your thoughts. Write one page. This is called interior monologue.

Some had difficulty getting the first few words in this assignment, but I walked around to give them encouragement and sometimes a hint for a first sentence. Soon the class was busily writing. Questions would come up about whether a character could "say a cuss word" or not. I answered with, "Do you really think he would *think* a cuss word at this moment?" Some said "no" and others said "yes," but it brought up the same useful discussions about the difference between thought and speech that we had found arising in the creative writing class. Usually, students were of the opinion that cursing is done with the mouth, not with the mind, so they tended to erase such language from their interior monologues and try it out again when they were writing oral speech. Then we would have to resolve the question of how much of the language was essential to the characterization and could be used without distracting the reader's attention from the content. Of course there are always some boys in the class who take delight in being able to write down a "cuss word" and not be reprimanded for it. Some of the delights of learning to write creatively are simple delights!

The next day we read again in the same groups. Keith's group chose this piece about a football player on his knees with his head in his hands as the scoreboard behind him showed 15-14:

> *O my God, this is our Homecoming game and I dropped a pass that could have won the game for us. I could kill myself for this! The team was really counting on winning this game. All of the past years that we play this team they have beat us in football, how could I be so dumb and drop a pass that was throwed to me? I have let my team down in something that they really really wanted to do, I hope I can*

face them, but the way I feel now I don't know if I can do it. The bad part is that we were on our own field in the stadium that I have played in for many years. I will try to make it up to them in the next game which is against the Shelby High Golden Lions. Look at me. I shouldn't even think about another game. I should be keeping my mind on the one that I really blew it for them. It was in the four quarter of the game with the score fourteen to fifteen when I really blew it. That was a chance for us to beat this team so they went on and beat us with the score still fourteen to fifteen. And all I could do is stay there on my knees with my head to the ground.

-Keith Rankin

Some of the emotion of the current football season came through on that one. The group had chosen the piece because of the truth of feeling reflected in it and the authenticity of its expression. Keith was proud of his writing, as was the writer of this piece:

... Here goes the ball. It's gone. Boy, it's going so slowly. This is like a slow instant replay. Come on, get up there. The clock's ticking away. Now it's two seconds. Please hurry. I did everything right. Aimed, feet in position. I should go in. This could be the end or the beginning. The end of the game or the beginning of a tie-breaker. Everyone is running down here with fright and hope in their eyes. The crowd is standing on their feet in hope that it will or will not go in. It's getting closer. Man, this is so slow! By now, it should have gone in. Come on, ball, go through that hoop! Oh, my leg hurts. Max told me to wear that bandage, but I didn't. Ball, if you don't go in, Coach K will be so disappointed. We want to show Foster that we still have it with or without him. Oh, great! It's getting closer. I feel the sweat popping out on my forehead. It's running down my face. I can't take my eye off that basket. There it goes! It's on the right path. It's going and wow, it went in! It really went in! We won the game! Here comes everyone. The guys and the fans. Now the newspaper reporters. There is so much excitement in the air. We can't get to the locker room. Now, there is a way.... Good, nobody's down here. Nice and quiet. Find me a couch so I can lay down. I feel tired, dirty, and sweaty. The shower and sleep is the only thing I want to see.

-Angela Howard

The next activity was a brief exercise in class in which the piece in the announcer's voice was changed to reporting at some later time. We discussed the difference in verb tenses and in the details we would omit as more time passed between the event and the reporting of it. We noted chronological order and how it was more important in reporting than in the monologue, which "skipped around" (as the students put it)

in the way a person's mind does. Of course that brought on some comments about whose mind had skipped around until it skipped on out!

To develop a generalization about the same sport, we used a poem I found in a student writing magazine somewhere and imitated its form. (Unfortunately I no longer have the original to include here.)

> Assignment 3. Generalizing. Read the poem. Then think about the sport you have been writing about. Think about the most pleasurable or exciting aspects of that sport. Use the same line length as the original and write your own poem about the sport you are writing about.

Kevin's group liked his best:

BORN TO DRIVE

The feel of the car in your own command
The rubber smoking off the back tires
Around the oval track dozens of times
The challenge of doing something no one
has done before.
The beautiful women and the money
The feel of being a winner
I love it.

- Kevin Stroud

I believe the cognitive process for this assignment is the same as for an essay about what makes that sport fun, but this assignment gives the students a feeling of achievement very quickly and provides us with the chance to introduce poetry very early in the course. By the second week of the semester the students have written two compositions and one poem, have read aloud in their groups, have considered what makes writing good, and have made choices about writing that built up their own and their classmates' confidence.

The next step in this sequence would be to develop some theory or argument about a sport or about sports itself. Any number of topics come to mind, such as, Why do high schools spend so much more on football and basketball than on other sports? Why do people like running today when few people except athletes ran twenty years ago? Should our school have a soccer team? and so on. Depending upon the make-up of the class and their writing ability, this might be a good time to do some research, some interviewing, some writing of letters-to-the-editor, even writing a speech to be delivered to the school board to argue for a new sport.

In the particular class I am telling about here, we discussed what

the theorizing level means, what topics we could use, and how we would have to prepare for them. But we postponed the paper in favor of some preparatory work to set up individualized programs to help with mechanics, and we began another sequence instead.

To prepare for the first assignment, we read Alfred Kazin's "From the Subway to the Synagogue" reprinted in Lockerbie's text (pp. 85-91). The assignment was

> Assignment 1. Recording/Reporting. Remember some place that you went often as child. Think about how it meant something in your life. Then write in either recording or reporting (or combine the two, as Kazin does) and tell about that place and how it affected you. You may use an opening sentence much like Kazin's, or write a different one, if you wish.

By this time, we were working fairly well with reading groups and editing in teams, and for this paper we used the instruction sheet on the next page. Usually we had prewriting activities on Monday, writing on Tuesday, group sharing on Wednesday, revision overnight, and editing teams on Thursday. All three drafts would come in to me on Friday and I could see what the audience group had suggested, what the writer had done in his revision, and what his editing team had accomplished in helping him correct mechanical errors. Wednesdays were special days because every member of each reading group received an *A* if everyone had brought in a draft and the group worked with them successfully during the class period. A student's editing partner would be someone who was close to his skill level in mechanics so they could genuinely help each other instead of one assuming the major task of getting the errors corrected. These are the final papers from two girls in the class, both of whom drew on their grandparents' homes for their memories.

> *My grandmother's beginning to talk about the old house she use to live in. It was a big house with a large yard and lots of trees. The house didn't mean too much to me at the time. It was just a place where I could go and see my grandparents. I remember how upset she was when she found out she had to move. She said her husband died in that old house and she wanted to die there, too. We tried to cheer her up, but she wouldn't accept it. She started crying and so did I. I had-not realized how much the house meant to her.*
>
> *We went back to the old house last week and the place looked different. The yard was all grown up, the house looked as though it was going to fall. The beautiful trees that were once there are no longer beautiful.*
>
> -Dana Hudson

GROUP REVISION: DESCRIPTION OF A PLACE

Reader (writer)	Audience
POINTING	
Begin	
(Read your paper.) →	(One minute of silence.)
	Point to memorable details. Identify the center of the paper.
Star or mark the places your audience mentioned.	
(Read a second time.) →	Point out good examples of description, noting how they convey feelings of the writer.
	Ask questions to remind writer of other possible angles to pursue.
Make notes in margin where you might add more.	
SUMMARIZING	
Listen. Make notes of how well this agrees with what you meant to say. →	Quickly state how the paper makes you feel and where the feelings lead you in the end.
	State what the main idea of the paper seems to be and what the details are that convey it.
Take notes of main points your listeners heard and how you can make them more clear or accurate.	
REBUILDING	
Make a plan for revising and adding in your next draft.	

All my early life lies to the place my father grew up. I used to go there with my family and stay all day with them. My family and I would go around the farm and explore the aged farm equipment. My grandparents were elderly and feeble, with gray hair and wrinkled skin, and that didn't change the way I felt about them. But their farm was a wonderland for me, because they didn't have running water, and we had to draw it out of a well. Also in the kitchen set a aged wood cook stove always filled with wood for cooking. A large pine tree shaded the house and the front yard. The house was made of wood and had never been painted. The front porch was shabby and squeak when we walked across it. The farm was so different and exciting.

But now my grandparents have sold the farm and the new owners have remodeled and painted it. The old farm will always be special to me, because all of the memorable times I spent there.

-Ann Turner

Since this assignment combined recording and reporting, the next paper in sequence is generalizing, or exposition. This step seemed to be the most difficult to make. Apparently the transition from thinking about one particular, personal experience to thinking more abstractly about a collection of experiences and then creating a general statement about them is a major cognitive shift. When the "special place" papers were in and read to the class, it required a good bit of discussion and talk to get across the idea of looking for what experiences seemed to be common to many of us and to frame that thought in a sentence. At the time, I wondered if this difficulty might not lie at the bottom of the problems we have always had in teaching average students to write a topic sentence and then support it with examples. We had come to this point from the "heart" of the matter, personal experience, and yet the generalization did not come easily. I made circle diagrams on the board to show how many individual experiences could be contained in one general statement. Several students had written about a grandparent's home, so we worked out a statement about how grandparents are important in the lives of young children. Others had written about a place where they had played or about the elementary school they had attended. We noticed that places seemed to be smaller when we returned to them later in life, schools in particular. Ann had a struggle getting a general statement, but she supported it with details from her earlier paper:

First draft:

Grandparents home is special to young children, because it shows how the people they love started their life. Now, their old, feeble ways help their grandchildren with the way they drew water out of a well or cooked on a woodstove, in which children look back on in growing up.

In remembering the way an old farm house looked to the way homes look today. For instance a old, shabby front porch that squeaked when we walked across it, or the large trees that shaded the old wood house that had never been painted.

It is a great experience to look back on.

Final draft:

LOOKING TO GRANDPARENTS HOME

Grandparents home is a very special place to young children, because it shows how the people they love started their life. Now, their old, feeble ways help their grandchildren in ways of wisdom in looking back to things that grandparents did, like drawing water our of a well or even cooking on a wood stove.

In growing up, children remember how their grandparents' old home looked to homes today, or how the porch squeaked when they walked across it.

It is a great experience on young children, and also on old grandchildren.

-Ann Turner

Seeing the difficulty that most students in this class had with the cognitive process of generalizing, I think we may have been asking too often for them to "jump in" on a topic too far out from its center; that is, to write exposition before they had moved through recording or reporting. Despite all kinds of visual devices and other methods I tried, two students in the class simply never saw the difference between talking about one experience and talking about the common factor between many experiences. This difficulty makes me think that there may be a developmental tie-in to the sequencing of the modes of discourse. Loren S. Barritt and Barry Kroll have, in reviewing Piaget's theory of egocentrism and Flavell's work with it, pointed to the need for research in the relationship between egocentrism and the modes of discourse. ("Some Implications of Cognitive-Developmental Psychology for Research in Composing," *Research In Composing*, pp. 49-57) In advanced classes, as most of us have observed, we have to caution students about generalizing too quickly upon too little experience. Often these students are entirely too glib with generalizations.

In another approach to generalizing, we tried this activity in the composition class with much greater success. First I asked the students to divide a page into six blocks like this:

Step 1. Develop a generalization by accumulating details about yourself.

First: Divide a sheet of paper into six sections:

During the following week students entered details in each block as they came to mind:

Block 1. List details in which you are like your parents.

Block 2. List details in which you are different from your parents.

Block 3. List details in which you are like your peers.

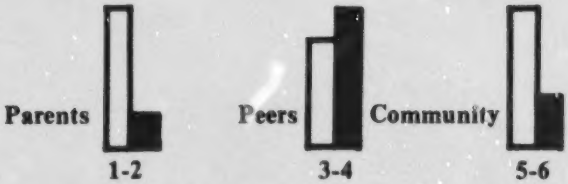
Block 4. List details in which you are different from your peers.

Block 5. List details in which you are like your community.

Block 6. List details in which you are different from your community.

On the following Monday, as a prewriting activity, each student counted the number of details in each block and made a simple chart with column graphs.

Step 2. Make a column graph of your chart of details. For example:



Study your graph and write statements about yourself from what you see there.

Step 3. Write three comparison/contrast paragraphs based on your conclusions, and support your topic sentences with details from your chart.

By making this visual organization of the accumulated details, several students who had not been able to arrive at a generalization in the previous papers were able to observe, "I see that I am more like my parents than I am like my peers or my community." And then, "My parents have more influence on what I am than my peers or my community." This exercise in inductive reasoning produced the best results, cognitively,

that we had in the course. Before completing the final essay, we worked out introductory paragraphs and conclusions that dealt with the overall subject of influences on young people. Within this paper, three body paragraphs of comparison/contrast related the details in the original lists. We had a conventional, tightly structured paragraph with a topic sentence like this:

> Although I am like my peers in many ways, I am unlike them in my ideas about life.

The paragraph was then developed by using the details pertaining to the dependent clause first, then using a transition word, and discussing the details that supported the independent clause last, followed by a summary sentence at the end. I wondered briefly if I were slipping back into my old, rigid ways when I saw so many paragraphs with the same structure, but for these students it was a "first." On Wednesday, while the students worked on individualized grammar and spelling, I looked at the paragraphs in class and marked the topic sentences with yellow highlighter, the transition word with pink, and the "clincher" sentence with yellow. A stroke of highlighter in the margin indicated if anything was missing. The quick visual image of structure worked very well with students who had not previously learned any kind of paragraph development.

By adding an introductory paragraph and a conclusion, these paragraphs formed the body of the five paragraph theme on "Influences on Young People." The writing was more stilted and lacked the richness of expression I had seen earlier, but the details were drawn from the charts and the organization was sharp and clear.

INFLUENCES ON YOUNG PEOPLE

Are you an influence on a person's life? People and things influence many young people's lives. Parents, community and peers have at least a little influence on the life of a young person. In my own case, my peers have been the greatest influence on me.

Although I'm different from my parents in many ways, there are some important likenesses. I'm different from my parents when it comes to their attitudes concerning teenagers, money, sex, pets and school. They think teenagers are too wild and that sex is just a plaything to them. My father hates pets and I love them. They also think school is a waste of time. However, we feel the same about people and we enjoy the same kinds of music and movies. Our hair is the same color and our height is nearly the same. All in all, I think my parents and I differ a lot more than we agree.

My father is from my community, but we are very different.

Although I'm like my community in quite a few ways, there are some important differences. I'm like my community in their feelings toward other people. Most of them are kind enough to lend a helping hand if you're in trouble and the rules and laws are reasonable. However, I'm different from my community in their feelings toward animals, luck and money. Most of the people around the community have lots of land and money, therefore I consider them quite lucky. My family is middle-class and our luck is limited. So, to sum things up, I'm more like my community than unlike them.

A lot of my friends live in my community. Although I am different from my peers in several ways, there are some important likenesses. I'm unlike my peers when it comes to drinking and smoking. I've tried it and I don't see anything to it. All my friends cuss but I only cuss once in a while. Although some of my peers use drugs, I never touch them. However, I'm like my peers when it comes to hang-outs, like Burger-King, Rollerama, and Sandbars. I also wear blue jeans and T-shirts. I can sympathize with my friends (peers) if they have problems because most likely I've been through the same thing. So in the end, I agree more than I disagree with my peers.

Parents, peers and community are only a few things that influence young people. You could easily find other things which do the same. In the end, just remember—all people have something in common.

-Dana Hudson

I did notice that many students who had had no idea of structure before could repeat the comparison/contrast pattern later on, so I concluded something was gained from the cognitive process, if not from the writing itself. I think more practice would smooth out the writing, also.

By mid-October, the atmosphere in the class was excellent. I felt good about the students' work, and they seemed to also. One thing that helped with writing, and with class interaction, was our journal writing. I use journals to expand reading as well as writing, and I think ten minutes at the beginning of class settles the students and brings their minds into the mood. I create the topics, sometimes listing them several days in advance to encourage thought. I want journals to reinforce instruction and enhance creative thinking, so the topics require specific uses of voice. For example: Write a letter to the one who invented work and tell what you think of the invention. We usually took five minutes to discuss our responses, and with this topic I was surprised to learn that almost all the students had thanked whoever they addressed as the inventor of work. One said he had addressed the Devil! Here are one week's topics:

M. Write a letter to someone who has not yet been born.

T. Preach about something that is wrong in the world.

W. You hear a knock at the door; opening it, you see November waiting on the step. Ask him in and make him welcome.

Th. Tell October what he has meant to you, now that he is leaving.

F. Write to music for ten minutes.

The purpose of these journal topics is practice in using different voices to different audiences in different tones and styles without producing an unmanageable load of formal compositions that must be carried through the group process and—finally—turned in to be graded. When I checked notebooks twice during each quarter, I gave a grade for keeping up in the journal along with a note on anything particularly good that could be developed later on. Periodically, we reviewed the Moffett table to note what modes of discourse we had been using in journal entries.

We also used our journals to comment on current events both in school and outside, to review television programs, to react to defeats in ball games, to vent our anger against vandals, to chide ourselves when we needed it, and to give praise where it was deserved. We wrote poems, sermons, speeches, letters, notices, memos, dialogues, announcements, directions, descriptions, tributes, prayers, and fantasies. The ten minutes at the beginning of class never seemed long enough, but we adhered to our rule most of the time. This class met immediately after the morning break, and another teacher remarked one day that the students must really love the class because they always came in early before break was over. I had not noticed that, but I had been thinking about how good the feeling was among the students in that very large and sometimes noisy group. The journal topics may have had something to do with their coming in early. I usually wrote along with them, and I have a fat journal with lots of good ideas for me to write about later on. I often shared what I had written first, and then others seemed to speak up more easily. One day, I wrote on a stencil and slipped out to duplicate while they were still writing:

Dec. 5, 1980

Today in my journal I want to praise my composition class. They are a fine group of students who always do their writing, come to class prepared,and do their best to help each other in their writing groups. They are learning a lot, which makes me happy. Since the course began, they have learned to write several kinds of papers and they work hard to correct their mistakes. Several of them have made remarkable improvements. In general, their attitude toward writing has changed; no one seems to be fearful of writing now, no one minds sharing his work with his classmates. (That's because they have learned how to look for what is good in a paper!) They have learned to use their journals better,

and have written two major papers and have another one ready. If they talked less in class, they would be just perfect!

I love my composition students and I surely will miss them when January 14 comes along. Until then, I'm just going to think about something else and enjoy being together every day at third period. That is one of my "good times."

At the end of the semester, I found a copy of this in a student's notebook with a piece he had written about his feelings in the class. He said that although many times they had become impatient with each other and "didn't want to write the paper," they had tried hard to write well "because the teacher cares so much about how we write and tries to teach everyone." He added, "One day she even wrote a paper about how she was proud of us and gave everybody a copy." It had been an impulse from the heart, and when I read that, I knew it had been worthwhile. That boy had already given my life a lift when I saw one day that instead of his tattered paper folder he had marked on through many courses, he had a new, big-ringed canvas notebook with "Composition" and a heart with his and his girl's names carefully drawn on the front. I never mentioned it to him, but I noticed and understood what he was telling me.

But enough about the journal experiences. I want to tell about what we did with the theorizing mode of discourse. A large helping of serendipity along with a background of other writing activities combined to create our best argumentative discourse. It all started with a film on philosophy. It was early December and the Advanced Placement class which I teach was beginning a unit on Greek philosophy at the same time the composition class was ready to write a theorizing paper. I had the film "Philosophy: The Questions of Man" (McGraw-Hill Films) on the projector for the AP class, and the composition class wanted to see it. As it turned out, the deepest questions of all to argue in a paper emerged from the film.

First we watched it all the way through, then wrote in the journal what we had seen and how we were affected by it. That was reporting. We then ran the film again and wrote down each question that was introduced in it. There are twenty questions.

Is there any meaning in this world?
Does anything I do matter?
Must I take part in this world?
Can we initiate actions which change the world?
What are natural rights?
What are the duties of one person toward another and to himself?
Where does the right to plan for the future end and the abuse of power begin?

Should public officials be allowed to decide what kinds of human beings need to be developed to do the work of the future? . . .

The others are just as provocative. After listing all twenty, each student decided which three he considered most important; then, in groups of five, discussed and reached a consensus. I planned to have them write an argumentative essay the following day. To arrive at a consensus took all period because every student became intensely involved in the discussion.

"Yes, you have to take part in this world. You are in it and you can't get out of taking part."

"No, I don't have to be involved in anything I don't want to."

"Public officials should never be allowed to make that kind of decisions. It is for God to decide what kind of people there will be."

"Well, if they could clone people, we would not have a shortage of doctors and nurses now."

Never again will I consider philosophy a subject for advanced classes only. The groups reported their conclusions, and the three most important questions for that class were "Does anything I do matter?" "Does anything matter?" and the question about genetic control. Then we talked about where this activity fit into the sequence of discourse; namely, that what they had been doing was developing a highly abstract theory and defending it in an argument. I told them we would write about it next day, but I wondered how students who were still not fluent when writing about abstractions could get the paper going.

Never underestimate the powers of Chance to bring forth good in a composition class. In next morning's mail I found a poster, a stunning view of the snowy Rockies behind a cold, blue lake fringed with firs. As I was putting the poster on the wall during break, an early arriver said, "That's pretty! Let's write about it." I guess she had forgotten about the plans from the day before, but I hadn't. That theorizing essay I had wondered how to start became this assignment:

Up there, high on the top of the highest mountain, lives a Wise Man. Go on a journey up that mountain, find the Wise Man, and ask him that question you considered the most important of all. Listen to his answer and write it down.

Here is one of the papers:

THE QUESTION

I was walking up the steep snowy mountain, wondering what the Wise Man would tell me. I soon reached his cabin. I knocked on the door and an old man of about eighty or ninety with white hair and a white beard answered the door.

He asked me in and offered me some coffee. I refused, telling him that I had a very important question to ask him. He said, "Go ahead, my child. Please feel free to ask what you like."

I said, "Well, should scientists be allowed to limit population growth?" He sat there a few minutes and then said, "My dear child, the answer to your question is no. I don't think it is right for scientists to be allowed to limit population growth. It should be left up to the people; after all, we all have to live in this world and I think everyone should decide for themselves whether there are too many people."

He had really helped me. He had satisfied my curiosity, so I said, "Thank you, thank you very much, but now I must leave so I can make it home before dark."

He said, "Won't you please stay the night; it is awfully cold." I said, "Thank you, but I really must be getting home."

We said good-bye and I started back down the mountain, hoping I would be that wise when I got to be his age.

- Dana Hudson

The writing period had passed quickly and no one had finished, so we had the papers come in the following day to be read in group sessions. Some had their Wise Man live in a cave, some in a hut, some saw him wearing a white robe and a golden girdle, others with a flowing white beard and sky-blue eyes, and one envisioned him in a log cabin packing a shotgun against "trustpassers." But every single paper had a living, vibrant voice and an organic structure derived from the trip up the mountain and the conversation with the Wise One. I was excited to observe how the students had unconsciously and ingenuously "lifted" their diction to fit their vision of the Wise Man. One in a long white robe would speak to the visitor in a formal but kindly tone, addressing "My child." The old hermit in the log cabin accosted his visitor with, "Who are you and what do you want?" Many papers had fine passages of description about the journey; others began with the dialogue. Some writers included a decision about what they would do with the answer after it had been given. It was the most creative presentation of a topic during the semester. I liked it because the Wise Man spoke what the writer thought in a voice that was natural to the characterization which had been created in the writer's mind out of his imagination and experience. The students had grappled with deep questions that were highly abstract, had said something worthwhile in response, and had said it in a voice of their own choosing which they had handled with skill and sensitivity. This assignment was one I particularly enjoyed writing, too!

This brings me to another facet of the sequential approach to teaching composition, the writing of writing assignments. Probably no single

act of the writing teacher is more important, and very little attention is paid to it. I know that for many years, I made assignments that were little more than topics, and would often make them in hurried, oral statements: "Write a paper on Lady Macbeth for Wednesday." The better students, or the grade-conscious ones, would pause to ask "How long does it have to be?" and the others would pass by the desk without comment. Worse still, I would make long-range assignments to be due in three or four weeks and then be crushed with disappointment when they came in, obviously thrown together the night before. It never occurred to me that writing a writing assignment is also a writing task. I thought the big deal was coming up with long lists of possible topics to choose from, and the rest would be routine. The topics changed, but the methods never would. That is not to say that the papers were all bad. Far from it. There were good ones and poor ones, by the standards I was holding in my mind or showing to the students in the models. The problem was that I never knew what caused them to be good papers or bad papers other than to say, "Well, she is a good student," or "he can't seem to catch on," placing the causative factors all on the student's side.

A presentation at the UNCC Writing Project changed my thinking about writing assignments. Patsy Steiner, a part-time lecturer at UNCC, gave us a checklist for writing assignments which I have since adapted somewhat and which I use to check each assignment as I plan it:

Teacher's Notes: How to Write Good Assignments

1. Always type up and duplicate the assignment; do not give orally.
2. Use the following checklist to evaluate the assignment before giving it to the student.
    1. Will the student know what kind of writing is expected?
    2. Will the student know how much effort you expect him to exert?
    3. Will the student know what audience you expect him to write for?
    4. Do you already have an idea about what you expect the students to write?
    5. Do you know what you expect the students to learn by this assignment?
    6. Are you able and willing to write a response to this assignment and show your writing to the class?
    7. Will you willingly and with pleasure read the papers resulting from this assignment?
    8. What do you as a teacher expect to learn by reading these papers?

For me question four, about whether the teacher has an idea of what the papers will be like, is very important. I realized that somewhere in my mind was a vision of the "perfect" paper on each topic I had given. Any paper that did not live up to my vision did not please me, and my comments leaned always toward the negative. This checklist question is not intended to cause us to eliminate these visions from our minds, but to cause us to become aware that they do exist. Since they do, maybe it is best to share the vision with the students in some way as they are writing the paper. Certainly we should let them know what we expect when some particular structure or rhetorical approach is being taught, as I was doing in the comparison/contrast paragraph described earlier. But in many cases, it is enough to become aware of our visions and know that they are our personal visions, not the only ones, so that we will be more open-minded toward a paper which does not fit our vision.

Another question on the checklist which jogged me into a new attitude was the one about reading the papers "willingly and with pleasure." That one, along with the one about being willing to write the assignment myself, did it for the so-called research paper. I haven't assigned one since. I have assigned interviews and I have assigned what Ken Macrorie calls "I-Search" papers (*Searching Writing*, pp. 54-65). I read these with great pleasure, and I write them willingly when I can get the time. (This book is, in fact, an I-Search paper.) When I think back over ten years of teaching in the high school, I realize that most of the papers I assigned were the type I had written as an undergraduate, and often on the same topics. Although I had made fairly good marks, I could not recall ever taking any real pleasure in writing those papers. So now "I-Search" for better ways to teach writing and better ways to write writing assignments.

I have gone into this detail about writing the assignments because I see it as crucial to making my sequence work out well in the classroom. Often when an assignment does not result in good writing, I find that I did not write it well to begin with. A problem often appears when I write an assignment to do with literature selections. In my mind arises a conflict between the writing activity and the need (I call it "duty" to make myself feel good) to find out whether the student has read and understood the literature. It is a conflict between writing and testing, or perhaps a struggle to combine them amicably into one assignment. I intend to work on this problem next year as I try to get the writing and the literature to move along together.

Let me return to the account of the composition class. During the final weeks of the semester, we wrote a simple "How To Do It" paper, and wrote compositions to be entered in the school newspaper's Christmas contest which was called "Christmas Past, Present and Future." Renea's first draft was a germ of an idea, which she then turned into a play for children:

A CHRISTMAS FANTASY

Characters

DIANE C., a little girl
REANA R., as the spirit
JUDY D., the mother
DAVID S., the father

It is December 24, 1980 the night before Christmas. Diane Camp is the center of attention in the play. She is in the kitchen talking to her mother.

MOTHER: Diane, what has been bothering you these past few days?

DIANE: Nothing much Mother.

MOTHER: If there is nothing bothering you than why are you looking sad and unhappy?

DIANE: I was just thinking, if only my fantasy could come true like those on "Fantasy Island."

MOTHER: You know that is just a show and those things aren't true.

DIANE: I know that but it doesn't mean my fantasy can't come true. (Pause) Mother would you like to hear my fantasy?

MOTHER: No, thank you.

Diane leaves out of the kitchen and enters the living where her father is looking at T.V.

FATHER: Diane, come over here and set down beside me. There is something I want to talk about with you.

Diane walks over and sets down beside her father.

FATHER: What is wrong with you.

DIANE: Nothing, Father.

FATHER: There is something wrong because for the past few days you have been walking around with your head down.

DIANE: There's nothing wrong, I was just wondering.

FATHER: Are you still thinking about that fantasy of yours?

DIANE: Yes, Father.

Diane's mother enters the room while Diane and her father are still talking.

MOTHER: Diane, it is time for bed.

DIANE: Yes, mother. Good night mother and father.

Diane goes up to her room and get ready for bed. Her mother comes

up to tuck her in and cuts off the light. Diane is laying in the bed, still wondering about her fantasy when a Spirit of Christmas appears.

SPIRIT: *I am the Spirit of Christmas my child.*

DIANE: *My name is Diane. (Silence) Why are you here?*

SPIRIT: *I have come to answer your fantasy.*

DIANE: *How did you know about my fantasy?*

SPIRIT: *I watched you when you were around the other children and they wouldn't let you play with them because your father is rich. What is your fantasy?*

DIANE: *I wish my father would give some of the children at school, who don't get anything for Christmas, a present or even some money.*

SPIRIT: *You have a kind heart. For this I shall make your fantasy come true.*

DIANE: *I hope you do because that will make me feel happier than I've ever felt before on Christmas.*

The spirit goes away and Diane goes to sleep. It is Christmas Day, Diane awakes runs down stairs in the livingroom with her father and mother. As she opens her presents, she still thinks about her fantasy.

FATHER: *Diane, there is something I have to tell you.*

She goes over to her father.

DIANE: *Yes, Father.*

FATHER: *I sent presents and money to some of the children from your school who didn't have anything for Christmas.*

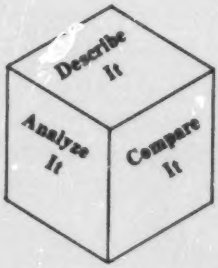
Diane looks up at the angel on their Christmas tree as she says "Thank you Spirit" and runs over to hug her mother and father.

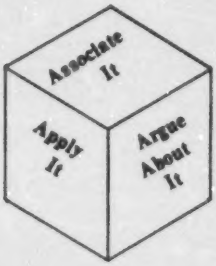
In this class, we had not worked with drama as we had in the creative writing class, but we were reading *The Elephant Man* at the time in preparation for writing a review. Renea had apparently become conscious enough of varying writing styles to see that her idea could become a play and to adapt it to the form.

In the review, we tried to combine several writing methods, using a handout I had prepared on "Cubing," adapted from an approach in *Writing* (Cowan and Cowan, pp. 21-22). After free-writing (Elbow, Chapter 1) for three minutes on each side of the cube, the students took these rough papers home to choose two paragraphs to include along with the description paragraph (which would become the introductory paragraph in

CUBING

1. Use all six sides of the cube.
2. Move fast! Do not allow yourself more than 3 to 5 minutes per side of the cube.
3. Make a new paragraph when you change sides.
4. Do each of the six steps in order.





Write the topic at the top of the page.

BEGIN!

1. DESCRIBE IT. Colors, shapes, sizes, and so forth. Visible details.
2. ANALYZE IT. Tell how it is made, how its parts are put together.
3. COMPARE IT. What is it similar to? Different from?
4. ASSOCIATE IT. What does it remind you of? Places? People? Other things? Let your mind go.
5. APPLY IT. What can you do with it? How can it be used? What is it good for? Who needs it?
6. ARGUE ABOUT IT. Support it or oppose it. Take a stand. Use any kind of reasons you want to.

STOP!

When you have finished all six, read over what you have written. There is very likely one thing you wrote that you really liked, felt some interest in, even some excitement about. You have certainly found something to say about this subject. This will be the center of your composition.

You are now ready for SHAPING.

the review) and the argumentative paragraph (which would be used for the conclusion). Many students discovered, while working with this form, that they could use this combination of freewriting and cubing as a quick way to organize and produce a brief review of a book or film. This example came from a student who previously had written only single

paragraphs of eight to ten lines:

THE ELEPHANT MAN

The story of The elephant man written by Thomas Gibbons, It was a very different story. The elephant man was discover in 1884. It describes the story of an de-formed man named John Merrick. Merrick looks like an elephant.

It reminds of some kind of creature that you would see at an horror movie. Something that is not real, a stuffed toy of some kind. It has two characters, the doctor and Merrick, the elephant man. He stays in a hospital provided by the doctor.

The story is unlike anything I have ever heard. I mean, you don't expect no human to have to suffer as much as the elephant man. People made jokes about it but they didn't expect nobody to be born and such pain. It is completely different from any other show or story you read or see.

This story is a good one to read. It tells of a man struggling with life and other human beings. How one man almost help him overcome those fears. What it is like to be used as a sideshow. When the elephant man really needs help the doctor is the next one to turn away. If he was not going to help the man he shouldn't ever brought him into the hospital. (unedited)

All through the semester we had worked in writing groups for revising and editing each major composition and had used the journal to expand our experiences in brief compositions. I wish I had known then what I have since learned about the varied roles that can be included in writing groups in the composition class. Allan Glatthorn contends that there are four distinct response roles which he calls audience, editor, critic, and grader ("Handling the Paper Load: A Differentiated Response System"). In our class, the writing group served as audience for each major composition, and each student had a partner to serve as editor. We had no critics other than the teacher, who also served as sole grader. During the semester, students became more perceptive as audience, and the editing teams worked fairly well, but we did not try to develop the critical function beyond the simple criteria of the effect the piece had on the reader—with one exception, the structured comparison/contrast paragraph and the subsequent five-paragraph theme. After reading Dr. Glatthorn's paper, I realize that, given instruction and an assignment sheet which defines the primary trait of the paper assignment, the students could go much further in evaluation. That will be something else to work on for next year.

The last major writing assignment for this course was an interview, which we planned to conduct during the Christmas holiday and write in

final form during the first week in January. Each student chose a person that he knew and considered interesting. In class, we wrote a paragraph about why that person had come to mind when I had announced the assignment, then planned fifteen questions which would bring those qualities of interest before a reader of the interview. The paragraph would serve as the introduction to the article, and the interview would be written up in simple question-answer style. Class attention increased dramatically when I told them their interviews would be written in "*Playboy* style," but the definition was a bit of a let-down.

Several students interviewed their grandparents to "learn how it was back then." Others chose neighbors with interesting occupations, one girl chose a woman who had had intestinal bypass surgery to lose weight, one boy chose a young mother who also cared for an invalid in her home, and another chose a woman who is 105 years old:

AN INTERVIEW WITH MRS. MARY GLOVER
by Dean Dabbs

Mrs. Mary Glover of Shelby, North Carolina is a 105 years old. Her parents names are Frances and Sam Glover. The reason I decided to pick her for my interview is because she is a very important person to me. She has to sit in a wheelchair because she can't walk, she has to use a oxygen tank for second breath. This is what she had to say to my interview questions the other day.

Q. Where was you born and what year?

A. I was born here in North Carolina on a Mr. Wiggins farm in 1875.

Q. How many people are in your family now and then?

A. I have four now and five then.

Q. How many children do you have?

A. I have five living children.

Q. What did you do for amusement when you was young?

A. I played marbles all day long.

Q. What was your responsibility at home when your were growing up?

A. I pick up chips which was wood to start a fire and I also brought in big wood for the fire after it started.

Q. What was school like when you was going?

A. We would start at 8:00 in the morning and had prayer and sang songs. And we also went to school seven months out of a year.

Q. Describe your early childhood.

A. I played all the time, but there was one time that was funny in my childhood. We had something called a wheatbox that had wheat in it and we would play in it all the time but if our parent caught us playing in it they would give us a whopping.

Q. Can you remember the things you did when you was a teenager?

A. I used to date when I was a teenager. The way we figure we was courting was when the girl and the guy look at each other and start grinning and wink, then they considered they was courting.

Q. What do you think of young people today?

A. I think the young people today are very smart in two ways. One way is that they are smart in going to school. And the other way is that they are smart in bad ideas.

Q. What was the cost of living back then?

A. Cotton was 9¢ a pound, 40¢ and 50¢ for hoeing the garden. And 10¢ for cleaning up the house.

Q. What was it like to grow up before the 1900's?

A. The boy was 21 before he was free to do anything he wanted and the girl was 16 before she did anything she wanted.

Q. When was the first time you voted?

A. The first time I started to vote was in 1961, when John F. Kennedy was president.

Q. What do you think about Women's Liberation from the time you was grown to now?

A. I think that is a good question, because if a woman wants to climb a telephone pole then she should do it. And if the man of the house is not at home and they need some wood for the fire then she should be able to go outside and cut it and carry it into the house.

Q. How did you take care of yourself to live this long?

A. With good health.

Q. If you could go back to any period of time where would you go back to and why?

A. I would go back to school and get my education.

The most encouraging fact about the entire interviewing assignment was not just that the planning and writing were well done, or that the students seemed to enjoy it so much, or even that it brought young people and adults together in a good way. I was impressed because the students who had, in many cases, expressed insecurity and reluctance toward writing in September were confident enough by Christmas to go out into

their community and use writing as a medium to record what they had learned. Ann Turner made her appointment with the local state representative during the holiday recess and asked her about her political career and about laws that would affect young people. At the beginning of the course, Ann had been one of the students who was most apprehensive about writing, constantly needing reassurance and instructions and always having difficulty getting underway. For her interview, she prepared thoroughly, revising her questions several times. In an excellent article in *Activating the Passive Student* (NCTE, 1978), William F. Woods discusses the interview as a model for research and a way to acquaint students with basic research skills. He says, "Later on, the experience students have had with the interview can be used as a paradigm for teaching the process of inquiry that forms the bases of the research paper." ("The Interview as a Practical Research Model," p. 131). I did find the interview assignment mentioned on several evaluations as "the assignment enjoyed most."

By the time the interview papers were all complete it was mid-January and time for the semester to end. I planned a series of assignments to be prepared for a final portfolio and a sequence of writing to be done as the examination during the last three days of class. For the portfolio, we used the "Writer's Choice" poster from Scholastic Magazines (1980), which has four photographs accompanied by four sets of assignments which are sequential, moving from narration and description to exposition and argumentation. The class was able to relate these assignments to the Moffett theory, identifying the mode of discourse needed for each assignment. Also to be included in their portfolios was one journal entry of their own choice, elaborated and expanded into a composition. It was my thought in planning for the portfolio and the examination that whatever the students had learned about writing would be revealed in two ways: in writing outside of class when time would not be a factor, and in writing against the pressure of time during the class period.

A slide from the "Eye Openers" kit provided a good base for the writing during the examination days. In the picture, a blind fiddler sits on a street corner in front of a Paris cafe, fiddling as pedestrians and cars pass by. This is the first day's assignment:

> Assignment 1. You are the fiddler in this picture. Write at least one page using the technique of recording or reporting (or a combination). Write a draft, then revise and edit. Turn in both copies. You have 50 minutes.

There was no hesitation about the method, and no questions about how to begin. These examples reflect the range of the class responses as to length and development:

Hearing all kinds of voice makes me wonder what it is like to see. I have nothing in this world to live for. Is the world a dark spot like I see it as? Well, fiddle, the only thing I have is you. Being blind all my life isn't really too bad. Cause I never really had a chance to see the beauty around me. I see my fiddle as a piece of my heart. If someone takes it away from me, then I will vanish. The fiddle brightens my dark spot up, not like the way people see day but the way I think day is.

-Diane Camp

BLIND FIDDLER

I might be blind but I tap my way down to the bar ever morning. So I can play my fiddle for a nickel or a dime. I try to stay all day. I can't tell if it's dark or not cause I'm blind. I played my fiddle until I raise enough money so I could buy me a blind man watch. I can hear the cars go by and the dropping of money in my tin cup. The people they like my fiddle playing. Some people like my fiddle playing, some people hate my playing, some just walk away yelling the old man's crazy. I hope one day before I die I can sit on a stage and play my fiddle. I love my fiddle, it's the only family I have got. I check my strings on my fiddle by the tune they put out. It's not hard to restring a fiddle in the dark.

-Eddie McCurry

A PENNY FOR A FIDDLER'S THOUGHTS

Only a dollar ninety-five. Why, those people are very cheap today. Back a few years ago by this time I would have five dollars already. How does anyone plan on me making a living through this small swindling sum. Playing my heart out day after day only to go home to a one-room shack. Some of those big fine lawyers and doctors walk by sneering at me as if I was some sort of trash. Endless numbers of souls wandering into this bar, spending money that could put a hot meal in my stomach. Fools, everyone is a fool.

I have tried so hard. Why has life turned its back on me. Why now, that I need it the most. People, please, can't you see that behind these dark glasses is a human. A human that has feelings like you. Yes, I do love and I do hurt. All I want is for someone to love me and give me a shoulder to lean on every now and then. Please people, help me!

-Paula Whitesides

AN OCTOBER EVENING

Well, it's been forty-nine years ago today that was to be my last day of sight. Oh, how one should cherish that Godsend gift. I was a young lad of ten the very day it happened. Some of the boys and I were going to try to break in Kelly's Bar that night. It was a cool October evening and the streets of Harley were deserted. Something told me I shouldn't go along, but boys will be boys. I was the youngest of the group so I didn't want the other fellas to call me chicken. Johnny, the oldest, was spitting out the orders left and right, Max you and Tommy be on the lookout for anyone coming up the street. Jason find me a rock and Fiddler, speaking to me, come along. You're going to break the glass. I was terrified, but to cross Johnny would be just as good as signing your death warrant. Jason came back with the rock and I quivered as he dropped it into my hand. It was a piece of concrete that had apparently come apart form the curb. To a young boy of my size, it was very heavy. Johnny said, "Well boy, do your job. What are you waiting on." I reluctantly stepped closer and closer to the front window of the bar. My reflection in the window assured me that all this wasn't a dream, that I really was about to perform the deed that was to end my life. My muscles tensed as I lifted the rock and crashed the picture window into an infinite number of pieces.

That was when the glass came flying out towards me. Pieces lodged in both eyes and by the time I had got to the hospital, both eyes had been permanently damaged.

So why do I stay here? This is where I took my sight away, so I'm hoping this is where God will one day give it back.

- Bryan L.

Only two students in the class did not write in the voice of the fiddler but reported the fiddler's blindness as an outside observer.

The following day's approach was expository. The slide was not used for this assignment.

> Assignment 2. Write an essay of at least one page in which you discuss some general point about blindness. Plan your paper, write a draft, then revise and edit. Turn in both copies. You will have 50 minutes.

I noticed that the students were taking more time to think before writing the first lines. When I compared first drafts to final drafts, I found that several had written a more creative opening paragraph to precede their expository paragraphs, and that often there was a thought or phrase from the previous day's paper reflected in this essay. Only one student did not

make a change of voice effectively, but retained the fiddler's voice and his individual situation instead of generalizing. Although the title implied a generalization, the essay was centered on one experience.

HOW TO MAKE A LIVING THOUGH BLIND

How to make a living though I am blind. I will get me a fiddle and a little cup and sit it on a table and set down in front of a store and go to playing with a sign saying Help the Blind. And if anyone wants a special song played, I will try my best to play it. If I play it good they may give me a tip. And as I say to myself, I can use all the tips I can get. As I play, all the people said, How can someone play and be blind at the same time?

There was some wavering in point-of-view in several papers, even though the thought was fairly clear.

HOW TO MAKE A LIVING THOUGH BLIND

You can become a hermit or you can get out. To show the people you may be blind, but that don't stop you from making your own living. Blind people need to make their own living like they used to do before they went blind. You get your fiddle and tap down to the nearest bar or street corner and play for a living. Of course, people won't like you at first. Keep trying, and you will see. You could get a job playing the fiddle for the bar somewhere. The People just laugh. A blind person don't ever give up. You can make your own living if you are blind or not. You do not have any other handicap besides your blindness, so you see you can do it.

-Eddie M.

But, for the most part, the assignment showed that the students could move from the inner voices of experience to the more distant voice of exposition with a fair amount of control. These are the essays from Diane, Paula, and Bryan:

CAN BLIND PEOPLE SEE IN A DIFFERENT WAY?

Although blind people cannot see things as we see them, they see the things we see but in their own way. When a person is blind thay don't really understand what is going on around them until something makes them happy. When blind people are happy they brighten that dark spot they see up with a smile. When people are blind they hear all kinds of noise and sounds around them but they can't quite figure out what the noise is coming from. Blind people think that they are not useful in this world, cause they can't really care for their self the way they want to care. They have to have someone with them all the time to guide them around.

Although blind people can't see, they can still learn to care about their self the way normal people do, but they have got to accept that they are blind and will see things in different ways.

-Diane C.

SOME CAUSES OF BLINDNESS

In today's world many people find themselves somewhere along life's rough road facing still another problem. Becoming blind. Blindness to some people would become the most tragic thing to happen to them, while others would look as if it were a challenge to them. If people were more informed about the causes and prevention of blindness, the rates of blindness would decrease greatly.

Many causes of blindness are accidental, but others are just happenings. Mill workers and machinists have the highest rate of blindness. Glaucoma and syphillis are very high rates among American adults. Strong chemicals and flying objects are yet another cause of blindness. Prevention is one way to lower the rate of blindness.

If many people would only take a few seconds to put on safety glasses they could prevent their own blindness. The regular eye check-ups and physical exams may prevent your early retirement due to blindness.

And so if some people would try to prevent and know some of the causes of blindness it may help you some day.

-Paula W.

A FRIGHTENING HANDICAP

Darkness is a frightening experience to many people; children cry out when the lights are turned off. So many people, though, have to live in an eternal darkness, those that are blind. They, too, would like to cry out like a child and have the lights cut back on. Blindness is a cruel handicap no one should have to experience.

Many people in the world are blind and each has their own ideas of how blindness affects them. Some may spend the rest of their lives feeling sorry for themselves and depending on heavily on others for their guidance. Others may take a more optimistic look and convince themselves that they are fortunate to be alive and that they can experience another day. They may lead just as normal lives as you and I. These are the special people that will try to do for themselves.

I once knew one of these optimistic people. He was called the night rider and he seemed that he had his hold on the world. He was a spirited man that enjoyed talking. I met him once down at the beach

while he was with my cousin. They say that some people that are blind can see better than others that have 20-20 vision. In his case, I can see why this may be true. He could listen to your voice and tell you what you looked like and a few things about you. He was a special man that I'll remember forever.

The night rider didn't let his handicap get him down and others shouldn't either. Sure, there are going to be things that you can't do, but you can try to help yourself. There are many things being done for the blind, making it a better place for them as well as for others.

-Bryan L.

On the final day of class, the assignment asked that the student develop a theory and write an argumentative paper to defend it.

> Assignment 3. Think about the problem of education for a blind child. What is the best way for such a child to learn what he must know to make his own way in life? Write an essay which expresses your theory on this topic. Write a draft, revise and edit, and turn in both copies. You will have 45 minutes.

This paper developed much more quickly than the previous day's assignment. Only three students had less than one page in their final paper. Few had any problems with voice or point-of-view. Only two opened their papers with references to "they" or "them" without identifying the subject of their paper. Diane took a very literal approach to the topic.

HOW BLIND CAN GET A EDUCATION

The best way for a blind child to be educated in a school is to let the child enter a class room where there is no more than 4 students. For the first couple of days let the child get the feeling of the room, and then introduce him to the rest of the children. Then you could test the child on different kinds of sounds that animals and people make. After you find out what the child already knows, you can begin him on sound reading. After he has learned what different sounds things make, you can learn him how to read by different shapes of dots he rub his finger over. When the child has develop his reading, writing and feelings he should be more comfort about himself. Although children are blind they can get the same kind of education that other children get.

-Diane T.

At the beginning of the semester Eddie had been the most reluctant writer of the class, using every possible tactic to avoid writing. Although he got a very late start, he did try to learn to complete an assignment. I found his firm tone and unconscious quips refreshing. Sentence structure and spelling will have to wait for another day, in his case.

THEORIZING

The best way is to let the blind child to be educated is let him go to a public school. There he would meet a lot more friends and feel that he is not a misfit child. Yes, of course the child would have to learn the special ways of learning. He or she would be around children he or she own age. I know I don't like to be around older people all the time. They could learn a career they wanted to learn. But in the special school they give you one to learn. They could make up their own minds about things they want to do. It is hard to have a handicap and let someone else make up your mind for you. For all we know the blind child might be a lot smarter than anyone else in the school. They could become a teacher for the blind or could build things for your homes. Like cabinet, shelf and other things like that. They are smart, but we don't know that until we give them a chance. I hope this has learned you sight-seers a lesson. Let the blind be in public school. It helps them as much as it does you.

-Eddie M.

Most students argued that private schools were best for the blind children. Paula had some surprising reasons.

THE EDUCATION OF A BLIND CHILD

When it comes to educating a blind child, I feel that the child should go to a private school for the blind. If a blind child was pushed into the society of seeing people, it may have a sociological and mental effect on the child. The children would pick on them and special adjustments would have to be made.

A blind child would always be left out in the games and would probably never have a true friend. The only friend would be one out of self-pity. The other children would rearrange the seats so that the blind child can't find their seat.

Also, another problem would be the expense of getting the materials that a blind child would need. Instead of using regular textbooks, special Braille books would be needed. Hand railings would need to be put up in the halls. A special teacher would be needed to check and help the child along.

Yes, a blind child does need to go to a special school. There, he will be accepted.

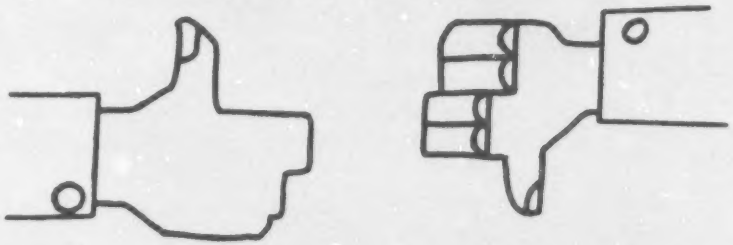
-Paula W.

Finally, I asked for evaluations of the course and the activities we had tried during the semester. I wish I could include all the responses, because there was not a single negative comment. Most students pointed

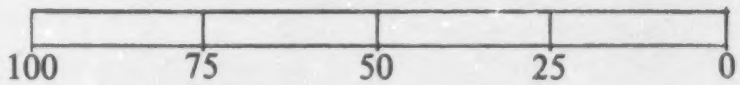
to recording or reporting assignments as the one enjoyed most. The assignments named as most difficult were generalizing or theorizing or the work with mechanics and grammar. Three said theorizing was difficult "because I did not know how to start off my papers." (One said

COMPOSITION AND GRAMMAR - Course Evaluation

FEEDBACK



SHADE IN YOUR EVALUATION



Please answer the following questions:

1. Which assignment did you most enjoy writing during this course? Why?

2. Which assignment did you find most difficult? Why?

3. What do you consider the most important thing you have learned this semester?

4. What errors did you have to work on most in your P.R.G.? How well do you think you did in learning not to make these errors?

5. What do you think you needed this semester that we did not get to work on?

"stories" instead of papers.) One considered the most important thing learned was "to read all of my work aloud and feel proud instead of embarrassed." Another said the most important thing was "Learning to write without having a problem getting started," and another named "Learning how to express my feelings in many different styles," and another "Learning how to write with details and how to use different types." Another said, "How to write and correct my work and know what I was doing." Others mentioned "How to use my imagination" and "How to freewrite" and "The four types of writing and how to do them" and even "How to put a common [sic] in your sentences." One, who said the most important thing learned was "To express myself in many different ways" added that we needed to learn "How to write a term paper for college," and underlined it twice. I hope the ability to express ideas and feelings in "many different ways" will be just as good when the time comes for the term paper. I think the evaluations showed that the students had comprehended the sequential arrangement of writing and had also spotted the areas which are most difficult to teach and to learn.

Some of the same students from this composition course are in my literature classes this semester. I have noticed that they are much more willing to write and look toward a writing assignment with much greater confidence than many of their fellow students. One day, before reading Act II of "The Taming of the Shrew," I said, "Write in your journals for ten minutes about your own idea of what a perfect mate would be like." A boy who had been in the composition course looked up and smiled, "That's got to be theorizing; it is definitely not reporting."

V

Conclusion

In conclusion, I would like to share some thoughts about using this sequence of thinking and writing skills in other subject areas. If every teacher would make use of it, the writing ability of high school students might take a quantum leap. We read much today about "every teacher a writing teacher" but I am afraid we haven't persuaded many to take on the task. The main reason is probably one with which we have had experience ourselves—that nowhere in their college preparation were they taught how to teach writing for their subject area. Most teachers, like English teachers, wrote papers on command in the subjects they studied in college, did some research and wrote it up, but never had a course in rhetoric or in writing, with the possible exception of a course in advanced composition which usually dealt with exposition and argument alone. Many colleges do not offer such a course, and many more offer it only for English majors to teach them how to write, not how to teach writing. So most teachers of other subjects give objective tests with an occasional essay question, perhaps assigning some reports or a research paper, but rarely is expressive writing used outside the English class even though it so obviously leads naturally into exposition and argument.

But the possibilities are endless and exciting, and they do not complicate the paper load. For teachers familiar with the sequence outlined in this paper, monologues and dialogues fairly leap out of the pages of social studies. Imagine the inner struggles of historical figures facing crucial decisions, imagine debates between opposing sides, dialogues between centuries or countries, speeches, diaries, journals, letters (all of which would lead naturally into an examination of primary sources) and so on. Such writing experiences would involve students in the very fabric of history by helping them personally to identify with its personages and their world. With preliminary writing in a journal using the recording mode and the voice of a participant, the task of answering a test question "What happened at Bunker Hill?" would be done better in a paragraph instead of in a multiple-choice "Which of the following did *not* happen at Bunker Hill?" If writing activities accompanied the studies, the

expository task of generalizing about the causes of War X could emerge more naturally.

In science, could students not write dialogues between an electron and a proton, comparing their natures and functions? Or write arguments between scientists about new theories? Or undersea dialogues between fish and plankton? Or become a gastrointestinal surgeon and address an audience of hamburgers, telling them what will happen to them in the human digestive tract? Could a cell not instruct an organ about how it is made? Or a lung send out an SOS to the smoker, begging for relief? I can even see the cancer cell as villain in a melodrama.

Certainly, these are not the modes of discourse for the professional scientist, nor would we have students write these and go no further. But if Moffett is right in the contention that perception and memory must be cultivated before ratiocination can occur, these are ways to heighten perception and enhance memory. For students in elementary and junior high school, the value of the first two modes of discourse is obvious. As Miles Myers has pointed out (SRA Position Paper, 1980, "*What Is Composition*") "...developmental psychology suggests that close personal audiences are easier for students in the early stages of development." I would add close personal voices, the student's own or voices of fictional creations of the student, to that statement as well.

The following examples are from Ann Harrelson's fifth and sixth graders, who wrote this assignment following a reading assignment about carnivorous plants. Mrs. Harrelson's instructions were

> Pretend that you are either a carnivorous plant or its victim. Write what happened on one day of your life.

Stephanie D.

Mosa Fly

One morning I woke up jumped out of bed, and flew into the hall and then flew outside. It was a sunny day and I was sort of hungry so I went to look for something to eat. I was flying around and smelled a sweet smell. I flew over to see where it

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was coming from. It was a flower. so I went down to smell it some more. It was a Pitcher Plant. I landed on it and it was slippery. I fell down, down, down whenever I would try to fly out the top would fold over and I would fall back down. Oh, no gas. I'm getting sleepy. (2 hours later) I woke up and half of me was missing. Oh, no I'm dying. I Ohhhhhhh!

THE END

Reading

Stephanie

This morning I was out in the field starving and all the other Venus fly traps were catching flies and I didn't see a fly at all near me! So I just set there in the field having nothing to do. Then suddenly I saw a fly in the air and it landed and triggered two of the hairs so I opened up and caught the fly. I it was so good I ate it so quickly that I wasn't hungry anymore.

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Me the Fly

David R.

I just woke up & started to fly around to get my wings loosend up. Suddenly I caught a smell & flew as fast as I could because I was hungry. When I got there it was a whole made Apple pie. I started to eat when someone came with a fly swatter. I flew away until I come to a swamp I seen a plant with beautiful red leaves and looked so juicy. So I went down to the leaves. I landed on the middle of leaves. I thought I felt a little hair but I kept on walking. I felt another hair and all the sudden the leaves closed and some kind of juice came in.. My legs started to dislouved and then my body started burning and then I was Gone!

Me as a Sundew Plant

Sandy

① One summer morning I was just ~~sitting~~ around ~~thinking~~ about when I would eat. So I finally decided ~~that~~ I would eat later on in the evening.

② So evening crept up slowly and I was ~~getting~~ hungry. About ~~that time~~ I ~~smelt~~ an insect.

③ It kept getting closer until it finally landed on me. It tryed and tryed to get away for hours.

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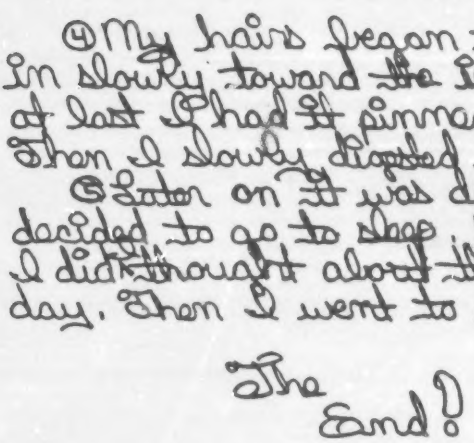
My hairs began to bend in slowly toward the insect. Until at last I had it pinned in tightly. Then I slowly clipped it.
Later on it was dark and I decided to go to sleep. But before I did I thought about the next day. Then I went to sleep.
The End!

These students have reinforced their learning about the plants and learned a good writing technique at the same time.

In physical education, in career education, in vocational courses, in every subject area, the modes of discourse in the sequence discussed here can be used to develop the writing and thinking skills of our students. And they will see the point in what they are learning and carry the skills from subject to subject. These writing and thinking skills are being taught already, here and there, but we are not consciously directing their development nor are the students aware of what they are doing. They should be able to recognize whether they are being asked to report, to generalize, or to theorize and choose an appropriate method to do it.

As it is, if we expect information and get opinion, we mark the student down. If we want a detailed report of an event and get an analysis instead, we write "too vague" in the margin. Or, even worse, we as teachers often find ourselves unable to define just what is the matter with a paper. We resort to the ubiquitous *C* without comment, or to cryptic marginal notes like "good point," or, finally to The First Law of Educational Physics:

> The buck passes up and the blame passes down, with equal velocity and in speed proportionate to the degree of frustration felt when grading papers.

This Law becomes operational when we think to ourselves, "Let their English teachers worry about it," and retire to the teacher's lounge where we implore, "Why didn't they teach them how to write down in the grades?"

But that is another soap-box in another park. Or perhaps another high-wire act in another circus.

Appendix A

ON THE IMPORTANCE OF COMPOSITION THEORY

I would like to respond here to some questions which always come up when I make presentations of this approach to teaching writing. First, the question of the importance I give to having the students learn the theory itself. I am always asked, "Can these activities not be done just as well without asking the student to learn terms and sequences? How important is that to the results?" Certainly, the activities themselves stand alone. They can be conducted apart from any knowledge of theory. But if that is done, the results may look the same, but they will not be the same, for the activities will become an end in themselves—an end, I might add, that the student cannot necessarily repeat when he chooses. The student who does not learn the theory behind what he is asked to do will leave the class no wiser, no more skilled, and no more in control of his writing than when he entered. It may even be that that factor—the concentration on activities and "fun" in recent years without a corresponding concentration on theory—may in some degree account for the poor command of writing that many "average" students have today. They have written well on occasion in isolated activities but do not know how or why they did it and cannot use the same technique in other writing. In my classroom today is a file cabinet stuffed with good activities, many received as handouts in workshops. They really are good activities, but that is all they are. They do not add up to any progression in writing or thinking skills. For all the momentary success and pleasure they may bring to the writing class, they remain mere gimmickry unless they fit into some theoretical framework that the student can call up at will. So, yes; I do insist that my students learn their theory regardless of their so-called ability level, and that we consciously practice it in our writing. I believe that to be basic to any true growth in cognitive ability or composition skill.

Next, I am invariably asked questions about details in the actual classroom process. "Is it really necessary to write in teams? What if some students just don't like each other? Can they change partners? How can I keep partners from talking and wasting their time? Will one of them not just shirk and let the other one do all the writing? If they just don't get any ideas from the first picture they get, can they exchange? What if my school can't or won't buy the Scholastic set? I

can't type, so I can't do this kind of activity if the teacher has to type up all the work." And so on and on. I will try to deal with all the particulars in a few generalizations. First, back to what I said about theory. These activities are merely that—a set of activities which apply a theory of composition about modes of discourse and the way they relate to each other. One must first learn the theory. The activities discussed in this paper are my own creation out of my own mind. They can be duplicated, but that is not the point. Neither are the pictures crucial to the process. They are good, yes, but only by their use. Another device could do as well. And about writing in teams. That, too, is a device. The point is fluency, imagination, and command of a variety of writing techniques. The student may come to these skills in many ways. A team is only one that I find effective. For the most able writers, who face a blank page without trepidation and from whose pens words flow easily, I rarely ask for teamwork. But for the timid and reluctant, no other method seems to bring about such good results so quickly. The same point goes for the display method. Typing their work is a mere "frill," a motivator which if we must do without, we may. Because high school students seem to like the professional look, and since our school has a literary magazine to which I hope they will contribute some work, typing gives an idea of length and appearance in print. When I can no longer keep up with the volume, students always offer to help. After we reach the point of writing drama, it is less important anyway, because the class is deeply involved in reading aloud and intensely interested in how the writing sounds as well in how it looks.

The classroom display has other benefits, too. I often see students bring their friends in to read something. Others slip in quietly during lunch to read and comment to companions, "I didn't know (X) could write like that!" My other classes read when they have spare moments, too. Sometimes they ask, "Can't we try writing some of these things, too?" Those requests give me the energy to keep on working toward sequences of writing assignments to accompany the literary works we study in other classes.

Finally, there is the matter of the role of serendipity in this approach to teaching writing. As I said in the paper, some of the very best writing experiences simply created themselves. Teachers often tell me, "But that just doesn't happen to me!" I don't believe them for a minute. All good teachers know how important serendipity is, and as much as we love to try to share those moments with each other, they really are not duplicatable. However, there is something that can help one recognize the serendipitous event, and that is what someone called "the prepared mind." Again, this goes back to the importance of knowledge and theory. Sam Watson has raised some important questions

on the role of knowledge in the Writing Project (*NWP Newsletter*, May, 1980). He says, "Effective change requires a framework which, rooted in experience, becomes conceptual. Without that, even the best intuitions will quickly become useless..." As we as writing teachers learn more and more about the composing process, we must share what we learn with our students so that all of us become prepared in our minds to perceive and seize upon the serendipitous moment. We will see the possibilities in a picture, even use an act of vandalism as an occasion to develop a theory about why people commit such acts. The essential element, in both teacher and student, is the prepared, knowledgeable mind. Lesson planning always begins there, in the teacher's mind. I am tempted to say it may end there, too, because myriad are the times that I have planned a lesson which was never carried out because something else occurred to me on the way to school or after I entered the classroom, something else which turned out even better. But these are the joys of teaching, joys which never lose their savor and which, in turn, create more joys.

I guess what I have said in this paper is in the final analysis a reflection of the way my own mind works. I must know the theory behind what I am doing, and I can work with as many theories as I can learn. I do not believe there is One Right Way. This paper has discussed one way with one theory. I hope it has helped to make the process and the pleasures clear for someone else. Maybe we can work out the next one together!

Appendix B

COMPOSITION II—COURSE OUTLINE*

OBJECTIVE: To improve the students' ability to write effectively for varied purposes by developing a sense of voice and audience and gaining control over point of view, tone and style.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

1.1. The student will demonstrate knowledge of the following terms as they apply to techniques of composition: recording, reporting, generalizing, and theorizing.

1.1.1. Give handout on Moffett's sequence "Notes on Writing."

1.1.2. Discuss the handout, explain the meaning of the terms and give brief examples.

Note to teacher: This is memory level work only. It is not necessary here that students understand this handout in its complexity, but his theoretical base should *not* be omitted. They will understand it as they work with it.

1.1.3. Have students memorize the table at top of handout and be able to reproduce it correctly.

1.1.4. With an especially able class, have them write short examples of as many of these terms as they can.

1.2. The student will write compositions of varying lengths and types using the technique of recording.

1.2.1. Begin a journal-writing program for the semester with a recording assignment. (see Moffett, pages 123-126)
Ex. "Recall the happiest (or saddest) moment of your life and write as if it is happening now."

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* This course guide, written by the author as the composition component of a semester course for use in the Cleveland County Schools, is reprinted by permission.

Objectives, numbered in single and double digits, are distributed to students. Strategies, numbered in triple digits, appear only in the teacher's guide. The handouts, numbered to correspond with the strategies, are also printed and disitributed to the students as needed. Teacher's Notes, Lists of Materials, bibliography, etc. appear only in the teacher's copy of the guide.

1.2.2. Write one page as a radio or television announcer describing an event as it is happening. Ex. prizefight, race, game, weather event, etc. (see *Purposeful Writing*, Chapter 1) Use sports photos from "Eye Openers."

1.2.3. Using the same photograph you used as the announcer, write one page of interior monologue as if you are the person IN the picture at that moment.

Here divide into Discussion/Edit Groups.

1.2.4. Draw a photograph from "Eye Openers" set and write an interior monologue of at least one page for that person. (see Moffett, pages 123, 124)

1.2.5. Write a composition as interior monologue recording an experience in your childhood.

1.2.6. Draw a different photograph from "Eye Openers" and write a dramatic monologue using this person as the listener and your first person as the speaker. (see Moffett, pages 124, 126)

1.2.7. Write a short play using the two persons in your pictures, expanding dramatic monologue into dramatic dialogue.

1.2.7.1. Read a brief example from *Man in the Dramatic Mode* to teach form of play, cast, and setting.

Workshop Notes: Discussion

How is a play simply the technique of recording?

What is *not* recorded in a play?

Note: If the character's thoughts are spoken in a play, it is no longer called interior monologue but *soliloquy*.

1.2.7.2. Put sketch on board to show stage terms: *upstage, downstage, stage left*, and so on (or give handout).

1.2.8. Write the childhood incident as a playlet including dramatic monologue and soliloquy.

Journal topic: write a dialogue between a 100-year-old and a teenager.

1.3. The student will write several compositions of varying lengths using the technique of reporting.

1.3.1. Choose one of the compositions written as recording and turn it into reporting shortly after the event.

Workshop Notes:

What did you have to change? Why? What, if anything, did you omit? Why? What did you add? Why?

What are the differences in the effect on the reader?

What basic differences are there in the purposes of recording and reporting?

What would be changed if you reported this event years after its occurrence? (Write a few sentences of such a report.)

1.3.2. Recall a place where you often went as a child, then mentally "visit" that place as it is today. Write a composition about the place, using recording and reporting.

1.3.2.1. See *Purposeful Writing* for an example of this sort of composition.

1.3.3. Report an event from a different point-of-view (i.e., change narrative voice and/or change positions in time.)

This could be based on the childhood experience paper and should be assignments entered in composition section of notebook.

1.3.4. Conduct an interview with some person you find to be interesting. Report the interview in Question-Answer format.

1.3.4.1. Prepare for interview by writing "Why I Chose _____ for My Interview" and including all you now know of that person. Then, write 15 questions to bring out the reason you chose this person.

1.3.5. Use the following list of reporting assignments (or others) to produce several compositions.

Letter of complaint
News story
Society page item
Short story episode
Journal entry
Sports story
Interview story
Response to test question such as: What happened at Bunker Hill? How does the digestive system work?

1.3.5.1. Workshop notes:

Discuss the importance of chronological order in reporting and how it relates to recording.

Discuss selective perception; i.e., since every detail cannot be reported, how did you select which details to report?

Discuss source material; i.e., since memory comes into play here, what effects will it have on reporting? What are the best aids to accurate reporting?

Discuss varying purposes for reporting and how each affects the writing.

1.4. The student will write compositions of varying types and lengths which use the technique of generalizing.

1.4.1. Choose one of your reporting pieces and develop it into an essay which makes general conclusions on that kind of event.

ex. from 1.2.2.: What makes [games, racing, fights, etc.] popular?

ex. from 1.3.2.: What are special places in childhood?

1.4.2. Write comparison/contrast pieces.

ex. How basketball and football are different (from 1.2.2.)

ex. Weddings today and yesterday

1.4.3. Write an article about a central idea or problem emerging from your playlet.

1.4.3.1. Workshop notes:

What is different in this type of writing from that used in recording and reporting?

What happened to the "distance" between speaker and audience in this piece?

Note that logic here is inductive; i.e., proceeding from particular to general.

1.4.4. Write extended definitions using all 3 steps

1. classification
2. differentiation
3. illustration

1.4.5. Write a composition of five paragraphs which generalizes about the major influences on your own life.

1.4.5.1. Follow this step-by-step system to develop a generalization about yourself:

a. Divide a sheet of paper thus:

1	2
3	4
5	6

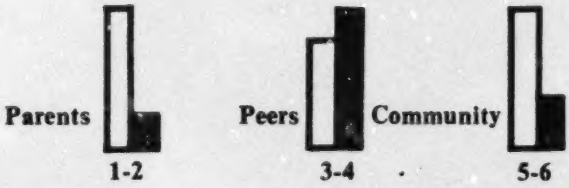
Block 1. List details showing "How I am like my parents."

Block 2. List details showing "How I am unlike my parents."

Blocks 3 & 4. Do the same for community.

Blocks 5 & 6. Do the same for peers.

b. Chart your details:



1.4.5.2. Develop three comparison/contrast paragraphs from your chart; one on each of the sections in the chart: parents, peers, community. Use comparison/contrast structure.

1.4.6. Write "How To" papers.

- change a tire
- bake a cherry pie
- clean a window
- take blood pressure
- build a fire
- make a ham sandwich
- cut down a tree
- write a "How To" paper

1.5 The student will write compositions of varying length using the technique of theorizing.

1.5.1. Choose a piece you wrote as recording, reporting, and generalizing and develop some theory about such events.

ex. from 1.2.2. Why do schools spend more time, money, attention on football than on volleyball or on tennis?

ex. from 1.4.5. Are mothers more influential on the family than fathers?

ex. from 1.4.4. Is jealousy different in males and females?

from any topic: What will happen in the future if _____?

Workshop notes:

Discuss the effect of the writer's own role on theorizing.

What is the purpose of these papers?

What gives a theory weight or credibility? (Which piece convinced you most and why?)

Is one theory as good as another? Why or why not?

Is theory the same as opinion?

How is the voice and audience relation different from recording or reporting?

1.5.2. Write a paper developing an argument for a theory.

1.5.2.1. Use 16mm film "Philosophy: "The Questions of Man."

a. list questions from film.
b. choose one important question.
c. develop a theory from it.
d. write argumentation paper.

Types of writing to be done

1. Personal experiences: papers, journal entries
2. Fiction forms: story, playlet, poem
3. Responses to literature and readings
4. Presentations of information
   -letters
   -papers or articles based on research
   -feature article based on interviewing
   -reporting for newspapers or journals
   -interviews

Techniques to be used

1. Recording
   - interior monologues
   - dramatic monologues
   - dramatic dialogue (playlets)
   - poetry
   - play-by-play
2. Reporting
   - articles (news, feature)
   - letters
   - journal entries
   - short story episodes
   - poetry
   - speeches
3. Generalizing
   - articles
   - speeches
   - poems
   - scripts
   - playlets
4. Theorizing
   - reviews
   - essays
   - scripts
   - poems
   - short stories
   - playlets
   - speeches
   - episodes
   - sermons

Teacher's Notes: The Composition Workshop

1. Get to know the students before placing them in groups; do not form groups at random, since they will stay together all semester. (Use group discussions/games, journal entries, personal essay.)
2. Form groups of four or five students each, seeking balance and harmony and opportunity for development.
3. Issue basic rules for discussing compositions:
   a. No put-downs or "corrections" (i.e. no editing).
   b. Discuss the questions in order listed.

      General:

      What is the dominant impression of this piece?

      How does this piece affect the reader?

      What is the "center" of the piece?

      What specific details, techniques, etc. produce the effect of this piece?

      Specific:

      What is the narrative "voice" being used?

      What audience is being addressed?

      What purpose is being pursued?

   (Then add such questions as needed for each individual piece.)
4. Arrange room for group work:
   storage for folders
   seating
   reference shelves
5. Have group sessions at least once per week.

Student Handout

Notes on Writing

(From *Teaching the Universe of Discourse* by James Moffett)

"Writing should be taught as an extension of speech."

The Abstraction Ladder:

DRAMA		
recording	"what is happening"	chronologic of perception
NARRATIVE		
reporting	"what happened"	chronologic of memory
EXPOSITION		
generalizing	"what happens"	analogic of classification
ARGUMENTATION		
theorizing	"what can/might happen"	analogic of transformation

Cognitive Steps:

(One stage cannot take place until the other has!)

Relations in the abstraction ladder:

1) distance between speaker and audience
2) levels of increasing abstraction
3) sequence of thinking skills and writing skills

Relations in Writing:

Writer → to → reader → about → subject
1st person (I) to → 2nd person (you) about → 3rd person (he, she, it)
speaker → to → listener → about → subject
voice → to → audience → about → subject

GROUP EDITING *

Procedure

1. Organize small groups of no more than 5.
2. Groups should be heterogeneous and should remain together throughout the course unless changes are absolutely necessary for efficient work.
3. Group decision determines if a chairman is needed.
4. Plan to discuss more papers than time allows.
5. Allow five minutes for papers to be read (orally or silently).
6. Observe one minute of silence after reading to reflect on the paper. (VERY IMPORTANT! Do *not* allow slips on this.)
7. Discuss work according to specific guidelines given below.

Discussion Techniques:
(Reader records the comments of the listeners about his paper.)

Pointing

a. Point to words or phrases which make an impact on you; have energy, are full of voice, make you "perk up" to listen.

b. Point also to words or phrases which seem weak or hollow.

Summarizing

a. Quickly tell main points, feelings, centers of gravity.

b. Summarize work into one sentence.

c. Choose *one* word from the writing which best summarized its thought or effect.

d. Choose one word *not* in the writing itself to summarize it.

Telling

e. Tell the writer everything that happened to you as you heard or read the piece. Using a story-telling approach is best, and do not stray away from telling about the writing and get on your own topic.

Showing

a. Talk about the piece of writing as if you were describing voices (shouting, whining, whispering, laughing, chuckling, sneering, lecturing, etc.).

b. Talk about the piece as if you were describing the weather (foggy, misty, rainy, sunny, cloudy, shining, stormy).

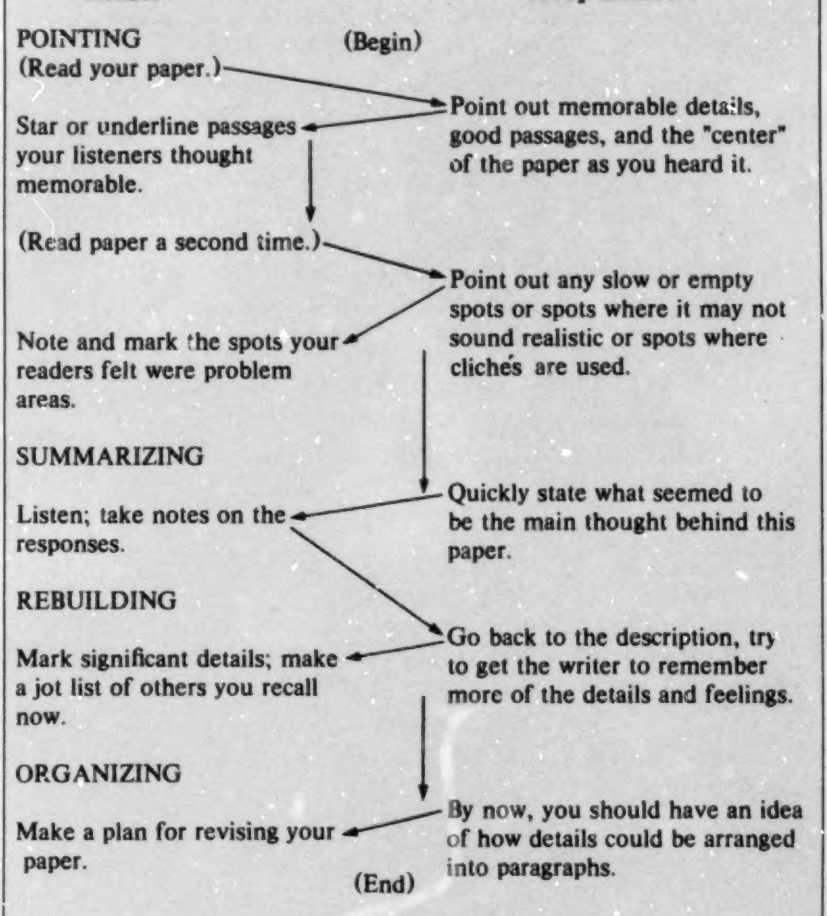
* from Peter Elbow, *Writing Without Teachers* (pp. 85-92).

c. Talk about the writing in terms of locomotion (marching, strolling, crawling, sprinting, dragging, etc.).

d. Talk about the writing in terms of color tones (bright, dark, blue, golden, gloomy, green, fiery, etc.)

RESPONSE SHEET FOR DESCRIPTION OF A PLACE
Assignment #1

(Follow the arrows to guide discussion.)


Reader
Group members
POINTING
(Begin)
(Read your paper.)
Point out memorable details, good passages, and the "center" of the paper as you heard it.
Star or underline passages your listeners thought memorable.
(Read paper a second time.)
Point out any slow or empty spots or spots where it may not sound realistic or spots where clichés are used.
Note and mark the spots your readers felt were problem areas.
SUMMARIZING
Quickly state what seemed to be the main thought behind this paper.
Listen; take notes on the responses.
REBUILDING
Go back to the description, try to get the writer to remember more of the details and feelings.
Mark significant details; make a jot list of others you recall now.
ORGANIZING
By now, you should have an idea of how details could be arranged into paragraphs.
Make a plan for revising your paper.
(End)

RESPONSE SHEET FOR GENERALIZING ESSAY

Reader | **Group**

POINTING (Begin)

(Read your paper.) → Point out memorable phrases, ideas, sentences, identifying the main idea as you heard it. Is this a generalization?

Star the main idea your listeners found.

(Read a second time.) → Point out good examples of personal experiences, noting whether these come from original composition.

Note and mark where readers found problems.

Point to any passages which do not seem to support the main idea or "get off the subject."

SUMMARIZING

Listen; take notes on the responses. ← Quickly state what the main idea of this paper is and what *two* items of support are used.

Go back to the support. Remind writer of points in his original composition he could use.

REBUILDING

Make a plan for revising and adding. (End)

REVISION *

"Re-vision"

"A Writer is not so much someone who has something to say as he is someone who has found a process that will bring about new things he would not have thought of if he had not started to say them."
-William Stafford

"The wastepaper basket is the writer's best friend."
-Isaac Singer

Questioning strategies for revision:

1. Find the one paragraph or sentence that gave you the most trouble and use it as a beginning or central paragraph.
2. Start from the end and work towards the beginning. If you need to stray in a new direction, do so.
3. What does the paper seem to want to tell that it does not? What does the reader need to know that you are not revealing?
4. Change the point of view (speaking voice).
5. What hurts most in the paper?
6. What is your best thought, word, sentence? Re-write with this as the focus of your paper.
7. Look for contradictions. They indicate a need for explanation or a change of direction.
8. Is there a shift in tenses or a switch in point of view? Do these indicate an unresolved thought or problem?
9. Discard.

Note: These strategies are not a process or a program. Each stands alone as a possible strategy of revision for a single paper.

* from Kay Tawney

Appendix C

NARRATIVE

(Notes from *Teaching the Universe of Discourse* by James Moffett)

Narrative is level 2 of the abstraction ladder, and also incorporates level 1, which is drama. The instances given here refer to the use of point-of-view in fiction, or the narrative voice of fiction. It is worthwhile to note that the most "distant" voice of fiction narrative is also the most "distant" voice of exposition, although Moffett has not carried his work that far in his book.

Sequence of Narrative Types:

1. Interior Monologue (intrapersonal):
   An unintroduced, uninterrupted transcription of what some character situated in a given time and circumstance is perceiving and thinking.
2. Dramatic Monologue (interpersonal):
   An unintroduced, uninterrupted transcription of what some character situated in a given time and circumstance is saying to some other character, whose responses, if any, are merely reflected in the monologue. The listener is now a separate person, *but not the reader,* who merely overhears.
3. Letter Narration:
   The direct presentation of a series of letters written by some one character to another; usually a two-way exchange, in which the letters not only report events, but create events and are themselves events.
4. Diary Narration:
   The direct presentation of some character's diary, addressed neither to another character nor to the world at large. It represents a transition between addressing another character and addressing the reader.
5. Subjective Narration:
   The narrator is the protagonist of his own story, which he is telling to the general public while still at the same age, or near the same perspective, as when the events of the story ended.

6. Detached Autobiography:
The narrator is still the protagonist of his own story, but tells it in a way that shows he is aware of his bias, if any. Usually he is looking back through a distance of time that enables him to disengage his present self from his earlier self and understand what he did not understand then.

The speaker and subject have split in two—into a first and third person—as speaker and listener split off before. (See Dramatic Monologue) The distinction between informer and information, the narrating and the narrated, becomes much clearer.

7. Memoir, or Observer Narration:
The narrator tells of what happens essentially to someone else, though he may have been a participant in the story. He has access to information as (a) confidant, (b) eyewitness and (c) a member of a community or "chorus."

This is the frontier between autobiography and biography, between first person and third person narrative.

8. Biography, or Anonymous Narration
Single Character Point-of-View:
This is the beginning of impersonal communication: the narrator (now more nearly the author himself) tells what happens to someone else, but without identifying himself and telling how he knows what he knows.

9. Anonymous Narration
Dual Character Point-of-View:
What applies above (single-character) applies here, except that the presentation of *two* characters' inner lives gives an effect of greater impartiality on the part of the narrator.

10. Anonymous Narration
Multiple Character Point-of-View:
Going into the minds of several or many characters gives a cross-reference of perspectives and is used to explore throughly a group, society, or period. The author may retire and let the characters play confident eyewitness and chorus to each other. (Here we overlap drama.) The personal tie between narrator and protagonist is broken further.

11. Anonymous Narration
No Character Point-of-View:
The author withdraws from the minds of all his characters and reduces his role as informer to two: eyewitness and chorus. One

result is something like myth, where external words and deeds carry the story with the narrator supplying background information and commentary. Another result is the external sketch.

Another step would be to drop the eyewitness role as well, leaving only chorus information in the form of generalized chronicles, digests of all the sorts of documents previously covered. In other words, the rest is history, summaries of summaries of summaries.

"To rite a composition," says Gibson, "is to decide three things...who you are; what your situation is (your 'subject'); who your audience is."

The key word is COMPOSITION.

Resources

Barritt, Loren S. and Kroll, Barry M. "Some Implications of Cognitive-Developmental Psychology for Research in Composing." *Research In Composing: Points of Departure.* Edited by Charles R. Cooper and Lee Odell. Urbana: NCTE, 1978.

In reviewing Piaget's theory of egocentrism and Flavell's expanding of it, the authors point to the need for research in the effects of egocentrism across the expressive, informative, and persuasive modes of discourse. The authors suggest a term, "developmental rhetoric," as a research possibility.

Cowan, Gregory and Cowan, Elizabeth. *Writing.* New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1980.

In the chapter "Stage One/Creating" I like the assignments on "Looping" and "Cubing."

D'Angelo, Frank J. "Modes of Discourse." *Teaching Composition: 10 Bibliographical Essays.* Edited by Gary Tate. Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press, 1976.

Reviews the history of the idea of modes of discourse. Particularly related to this paper are the comments about Moffett's spectrum of discourse and James Kinneavy's theory of discourse as a function of language and thinking.

Elbow, Peter. *Writing Without Teachers.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1973.

Free writing is described in Chapter 1.

Geuder, Patricia, *et al.*, eds. *They Really Taught Us How To Write.* Urbana: NCTE, 1974.

A collection of essays about teaching writing and classroom strategies used by teachers of students winning NCTE Writing Awards. The variety of approaches in the book is interesting, since all the teachers were named by their students as effective teachers of composition.

Glatthorn, Allan A. "An Analysis of Grading Systems in Teaching Composition." Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1981. (Mimeographed.)

Reviews previous articles on differentiated response system and elaborates on systems for the teacher to use as critic and grader. Includes table outlining compositions for an entire course and the differentiated response system for each one.

_____. "Handling the Paper Load: A Differentiated Response System." Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1981.

English teachers, Glatthorn asserts, need not spend all their spare time grading student papers. He advocates a system which differentiates the types of response a reader might make to pieces of writing. The reader might play any of four roles—audience, editor, critic, or grader—and respond according to the role. Further, any of these roles may be played by peers, parents, and other readers, including the writer himself or herself.

Heins, Ethel L. "From Reading to Literacy." *Today's Education,* April/May, 1980, pp. 41G-46G.

Kinneavy, James. *A Theory of Discourse.* Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1971.

Kinneavy's theory is much like Moffett's spectrum of discourse but adds dimensions particularly useful for designing a writing curriculum. He classifies writing as expressive, literary, referential, and persuasive and gives examples of each from forms in everyday use. Kinneavy's scheme can be used to plan journal assignments to insure students' use of a range of forms.

Lockerbie, Bruce. *Purposeful Writing.* Menlo Park, California: Addison-Wesley, 1972.

A writing textbook set up in chapters on voice, audience, tone, style, and attitude. Also has supplementary readings and many assignments.

Macrorie, Ken. *Searching Writing.* Rochelle Park, New Jersey: Hayden Book Company, 1980.

Chapter 1 is on free writing. Chapter 6 describes the I-Search paper.

_____. *Telling Writing.* Rochelle Park, New Jersey: Hayden Book Company, 1976.

Chapter 13, "Keeping A Journal," discusses ways to get valuable journal-writing going in the classroom. Chapter 15, "Writing

Responses," is a good clarification on the proper approach to what is called criticism. Some student responses to *Hamlet* illustrate the possibilities in journal entries as responses to literature.

Moffett, James. *Teaching the Universe of Discourse.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1968.

Sets up a frame of reference for teaching composition in relation to the entire spectrum of discourse. The theoretical basis for this paper, Moffett's book has been invaluable.

_____. and McElheny, Kenneth R. *Points of View.* New York: New American Library, 1966.

A collection of forty-one short stories in a sequential arrangement illustrating the eleven points of view defined by Moffett. In the Afterword, Moffett and McElheny relate the evolution of discourse to Piaget's description of the child's learning as a process of de-centering and expanding the perspective. The composition sequences in this monograph attempt the expansion of perspective through non-fiction.

Myers, Miles. *What Is Composition?* SRA Position Paper. Chicago, Illinois, SRA, 1980.

Myers outlines six theories of composition—genre, subject, situation, sentence, problem-solving, and cosmetic—each of which emphasizes a different part of the composing process. My approach is a blend of genre, subject, situation, and problem-solving.

Philosophy: The Questions of Man. McGraw-Hill Films, "The Humanities Series."

Siff, David. "Teaching Freshman Comp to New York Cops." *College English,* January, 1975, pp. 540-547.

Siff relates experiences in which he had students write through the eyes of others, primarily their "opposites" in society. Siff notes an astounding change in the quality of the writing.

Solotaroff, Sarah, ed. The *Man* Series. Evanston, Illinois: McDougal, Littell & Co., 1969.

Six volumes each in four sets: *Man in the Poetic Mode; Man in the Dramatic Mode; Man in the Fictional Mode; Man in the Expository Mode.*

Watson, Sam. "Knowledge: A Dimension the Writing Project Neglects?" *National Writing Project Newsletter,* May, 1980, pp. 1-3.

Watson raises questions which suggest a larger role for theoretical knowledge in the Writing Project model. His points support my own contention that knowledge of the theory is important for student growth in the composition method outlined in this paper.

"Writer's Choice: Activities for Writing." New York: Scholastic Magazines, 1980. (Spirit masters)

Accompanies "Writer's Choice" poster and gives four assignments for each of four photographs. Each set of assignments includes description, narration, exposition, and argumentation. This material is good for quick testing or check-up on skills or modes of discourse theory. Includes excellent photographs. No editorial material.

The Author

Dixie Gibbs Dellinger was born and raised in the mountains of North Carolina in the historic old Flat Rock community near Hendersonville. While a music major at Brevard Junior College, she met her husband, married and left school to raise a family. After nineteen years as housewife and mother, Dixie returned to school to major in history and English, receiving her B.A. at UNC Charlotte in 1970 and her master's in English there in 1972. Since then she has done further study in education of gifted children and in teaching writing. She has conducted workshops at ASCD national meetings and as consultant in the UNCC Writing Project, she has conducted many workshops in teaching writing for North Carolina teachers.

Dixie teaches at Burns High School, a 900-student school set at the foot of the South Mountains in rural Cleveland county. She teaches all levels of English, newspaper journalism, advises the school literary magazine, and served as department chairman for seven years.

For the Cleveland county system's English curriculum, she has written course guides for Advanced Placement, Advanced English III, Modern British Literature, American Ideas, Ethnic Literature, "Chills and Thrills" Literature, American Dialects, and Semantics.